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George Cowper's gift
to the Mission at Liverpool
1764.



Rd



George Cowper's gift
to the Mission at Liverpool
1764.



Pd



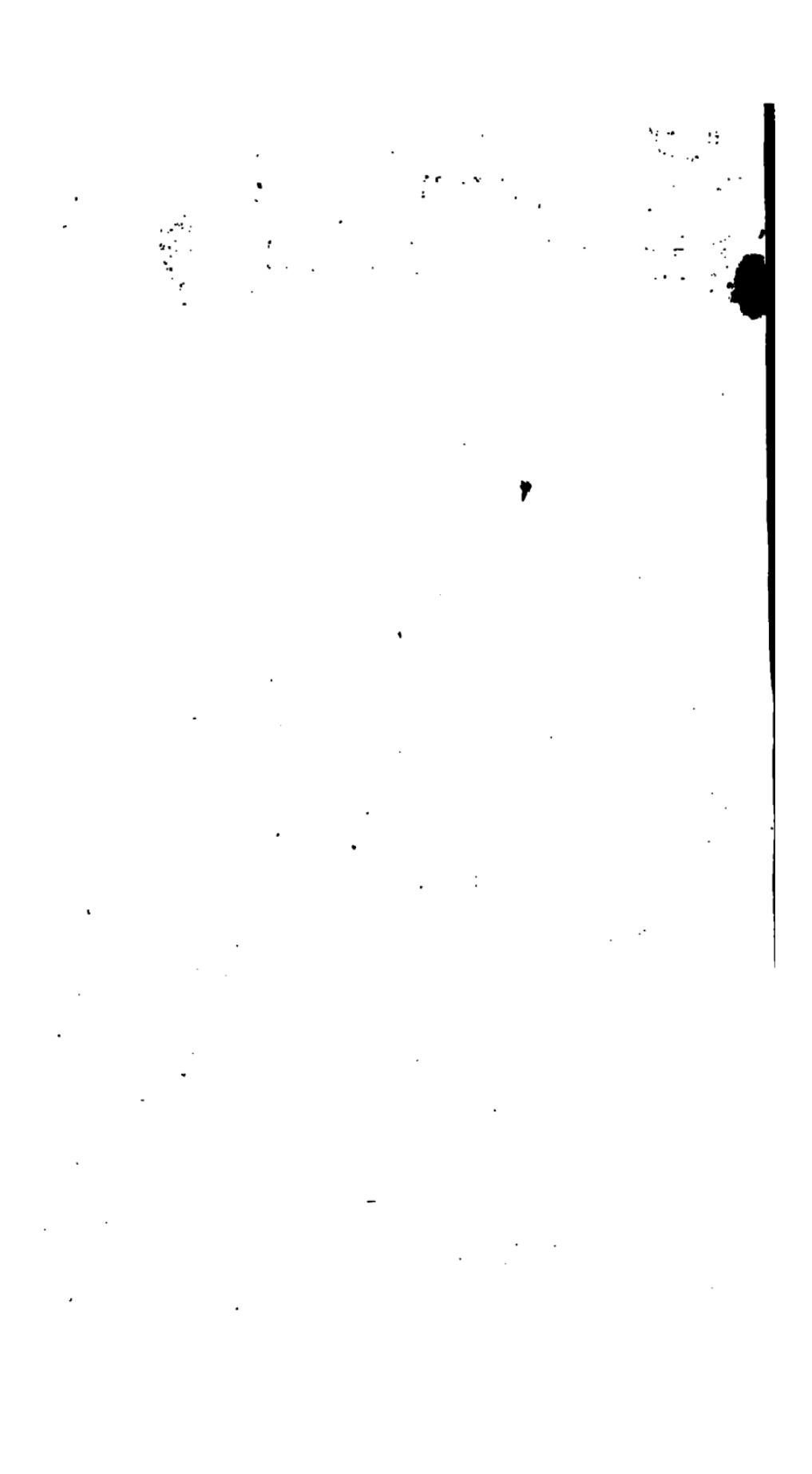


THE
MIRACULOUS
POWERS
OF THE
Church of Christ
ASSERTED
THROUGH EACH SUCCESSIVE
CENTURY
FROM THE APOSTLES
DOWN
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

*Etiam nunc fiunt miracula in ejus nomine, sive per sacramenta
ejus, sive per orationes vel memorias Sanctorum ejus.* S. AUG.
l. 22. de Civ. Dei c. 8.

ANNO M DCC LVI.







P R E F A C E.

THE variety of systems which, of late years, have been offered to the Publick, touching the continuance of miracles in the Church of God, first raised in me an inclination to examine the same subject: and the interests of Christianity, which seemed to be greatly hurt by the opinion which Dr. MIDDLETON had brought into vogue, induced me to go through the work more clearly, in defence of that

great and common cause. I was glad to see, that so many learned men, of his own communion, entered the lists against him: but yet, I must confess, I did not meet with that satisfaction, in their writings, which I desired. For, after having brought down the succession of miracles, through two or three centuries from the death of the Apostles, they all stop short; though it is evident, that, by the very same arguments, they might have deduced a succession of the same wonderful works into the later ages. This inconsistency cannot, I think, be otherwise accounted for, than by supposing, that they are conscious of some latent sore which they fear to touch. For as to the arguments themselves, I cannot conceive why they should not have the same weight in one century as in another. The intrinsick nature of good sense, probity

probity and veracity does not alter with times and seasons. If a man of competent knowledge and veracity bear witness to the reality of some particular fact in his own time; what matters it, whether he lived in the second century, or in the twelfth? His qualifications as a witness, and not the age in which he lived, are the points to be considered. Miracles are *historical facts*: their existence therefore may and ought to be determined, by the historical monuments of the times when such facts are said to have been done. If witnesses, duly qualified to give convincing evidence, do in effect attest the continuance of them through every age down to the present; let their testimony have its due weight. This seems to be the most natural, and indeed the only method, of bringing this controversy to an issue. This method

thod I have followed in my inquiries, the result of which I now present to the Publick, not as a complete work, but rather as a sketch or short essay, to shew that a more able pen, with proper leisure and authentick historical monuments, may, on the same plan, draw up such a history of miraculous events, through each century down to the present time, as would be entirely satisfactory to every lover of truth.



T H E



THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS
OF THE
Church of Christ
ASSERTED.

P A R T I.

In which are discussed the general grounds and consequences of the several systems, which have been adopted by Protestants, and of that, in particular, which was published by Dr. MIDDLETON in his Free Inquiry, relating to the cessation of Miracles. An abstract of the reasons which we have for asserting that the miraculous powers never were wholly withdrawn from the Christian Church. To which are added some few remarks on a book called the Criterion or Miracles examined.

§ 1.

The original grant of the miraculous powers.

BEFORE I enter upon this question, as it relates to the *continuance* of the miraculous powers in the church, it will be proper to premise a word or two, on the *original grant* of them, which Christ made to his followers.

In the gospel of St. Matthew we read that *when he had called his twelve disciples together, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of sicknesses.* [1] And after his resurrection, when he commissioned them to go and preach the gospel to all nations, he said: *These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover.* [2]

Here it may be observed that these wonderful gifts are not appropriated to the Apostles, exclusive of the rest of the faithful; but are promised to those also who shall believe through their preaching, and this without any limitation either of time or of persons.

And after his ascension, when the faithful were assembled all together in one place, he sent down the Holy Ghost upon them, and they were all filled, and began to speak with divers tongues. Which being noised abroad, and a great multitude of people drawn together, St. Peter took occasion, from thence, to open to them the mystery of the gospel, saying: *This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith the Lord) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters*

[1] Mat. x. 1. [2] Mark xvi. 17. shall

shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. [1] Nor was it to these only that the Holy Ghost was given, but to many others also who were converted after this event. So when St. Peter was preaching to the Centurion *Cornelius* and his family, who were gentiles, the Holy Ghost was poured forth upon them; and they spoke with tongues and magnified God. [2] And when St. Peter and St. John had laid their hands upon the *Samaritan* converts, the gifts of the Holy Ghost were so manifest in them, that *Simon Magus* offered money, saying: *Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.* [3]

St. Paul in his first epistle to the *Corinthians* enumerates the divers spiritual gifts which were usually bestowed on the faithful at that time. *To one indeed by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom: and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches.* But all these things, one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will [4] These are the gifts which were, at that time, imparted to believers, severally to every one, according to the will of the Almighty Giver. The following explanation of them is collected from the best approved commentators on this subject.

By the *word of wisdom* is generally understood the gift of *prudence* or *discretion*, in the use of all

[1] *Acts. ii. 16.* [2] *Acts. x.* [3] *Acts. viii. 19.*
[4] *1 Cor. xii.*

other spiritual gifts, so that they be not exerted out of due time and place &c. A point wherein some of the faithful were deficient, as appears from the xiv chap. of the same epistle. By *the word of knowledge* is meant a facility of expounding the doctrine of faith, so as to lay it open to the hearers in such a method as may be most suitable to their capacities. By *faith*, in this passage, is meant, not that theological virtue by which we yield assent to every revealed truth, on the testimony of God ; but a certain strong *confidence* or *reliance* on God for the working of miracles. These three gifts are not miraculous : but the third has a particular relation to the miraculous powers. By *the grace of healing* is understood the miraculous gift of healing bodily diseases, either by the laying on of hands, or by prayer, or by anointing with oil &c. [1] By *the working of miracles* is understood the power of doing greater works than those last mentioned ; as the raising of the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, casting out devils &c. which, being effects of a superior nature to the curing of diseases, are absolutely called *miracles* or *powers δυάρεις*. By *prophecy* is meant, not only the foretelling of things to come, and the discovering of hidden secrets, but also the gift of expounding deep mysteries, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost suggesting divers interpretations, which tend to instruction and edification. And if it be taken in this light, independently of the foreknowledge of things to come, it is not properly miraculous, though it belongs to the *gifts* which are called *χαρισματα*. The *discerning of spirits* is the gift of distinguishing the suggestions of the good Spirit from those of

[1] Mark vi.

the

the evil one. By the *kinds of tongues* is signified the gift of speaking divers languages; which was conferred upon the Apostles and some of the principal disciples in a more eminent degree, to enable them to preach the gospel, and to establish a regular ministry in different parts of the world. To others it was given in an inferiour degree, in somuch that several of the faithful were inspired by the Holy Ghost to utter the praises of God in a language themselves did not understand, as appears from chap. xiv of the 1st. epistle to the *Corinthians*: the intent whereof seems to have been, to foreshew that the Church of *Christ* should be spread through all nations, and speak all languages. By *interpretation of speeches* is meant the gift of interpreting what was spoken by another in an unknown tongue.

§ 2. These miraculous powers, which, in the days of the Apostles, were very frequently exerted for the benefit of the faithful, and for the conviction of unbelievers, in process of time became less frequent, according as there was less need of them. But they never were totally withdrawn from the Church; nor has there passed any one age, from that of the Apostles down to the present time, in which several great and evident miracles have not been wrought.

This is matter of fact attested by a cloud of witnesses, whose judgment and veracity cannot, with any reason, be called in question. The primitive Fathers, those shining lights of the world, make mention of many wonderful miracles wrought in their days, by the sign of the cross, by the use of holy oil, by the invocation of saints, at the tombs of the martyrs &c. which they relate,

not from groundless uncertain reports, but of their own certain knowledge, as facts that were done before their own eyes. And that Almighty God has ever since continued to favour and protect his Church, from time to time, by the same demonstrations of power, through all after-ages, we are assured by the best historical monuments.

Now, as it is certain that God cannot work miracles to establish or confirm a falsehood, therefore such instances of a divine interposition have been always alledged, with very good reason, in confirmation of the doctrine and practices of the catholick Church. For it is very evident that a miracle wrought, for example, by the use of the sign of the cross, or by prayer at the reliques of the saints, must needs authorize such practices as are in use among Catholicks, to the utter confutation of all those who affect to call them superstitious.

Middle-
ton's sys-
tem on
this sub-
ject. Dr. Conyers Middleton was sensible of the force of this argument, and had ob-
served that every one who had attempted to confute it, upon the common hypo-
thesis of the truth of those miracles, had done nothing but trifle, and shuffle, and labour for pitiful distinctions, which betrayed a consciousness of acting against their own judgments. For that reason, he resolved to attempt the task in a new way, by denying the reality of the miracles. But being aware that such a system could not possibly gain ground, so long as any of the ancient Saints and Fathers of the Church were esteemed worthy of credit; he determined to make a bold push, and to ruin at once the whole authority of all our ancient ecclesiastical histories, and of all the eminent men who, by the sanctity of their lives, and by

by their learned writings, had adorned and supported the Church of God in all ages down to the present (a).

With this view he presented the publick with an elaborate treatise, tending to shew that the miraculous powers had been totally withdrawn from the Church, ever since the death of the Apostles; or rather before they were all dead: and that all the different miracles, which are related, by the holy Fathers and Church historians, to have been wrought since that time, were forged by designing knaves, and fondly adopted by credulous fools and mad enthusiasts. 'The ancient Fathers, says he, by whose authority that delusion (of miracles) was originally imposed, and has ever since been supported, were extremely credulous and superstitious; possessed with strong prejudices and an enthusiastic zeal, in favor, not only of Christianity in general, but of every particular doctrine which a wild imagination could ingraft upon it; and scrupling no art or means, by which they might propagate the same principles. In short, they were of a character from which nothing could be expected that was candid or impartial.' [1] And this he imagines to have been the case from the very beginning. The great fame and success of the Apostolic miracles, would naturally excite some of the most crafty, when the Apostles themselves were dead, to attempt some juggling tricks in imitation of them.... And when these artful pre-

(a) This system of the Doctor's is of Dutch extraction. The plan was first laid by *Van Dale* an *Anabaptist* in *Holland*, and afterwards enlarged by *Le Clerc*. See *Bibliothèque choisie de l'anoée 1707*. T. XIII. article III.

[1] Pref. p. xxxi.

‘ tenders, by insinuating themselves chiefly in private houses, or among the ignorant populace, had been able to maintain their ground, through the three first centuries, the leading clergy of the fourth, who were then established by the civil power, and at liberty to apply all arts, without reserve, to the conversion of the heathens, understood their interest too well, to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts.’ [1]

How groundless these aspersions are in themselves, and how destructive of Christianity in their consequences, shall be shewn in due place. But it will be proper first to observe that the Doctor, as a specimen of his great regard for the gospel, has acquainted us, that he is in no manner of concern about the consequences of his system. ‘ To speak my mind freely, says he, on the subject of consequences; I am not so scrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profession are apt to be.’ [2] So, let the consequence be what it will to the gospel; this at least he will affirm, that his system is necessary for the defence of the protestant religion against the Church of *Rome*. ‘ [3] By granting them (the Catholicks) but a single age of miracles, after the times of the Apostles; we shall be intangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, till we allow the same powers also to the present age.’ [4]

He was sensible that he could not, with any consistency, deny the reality of miracles wrought in later centuries, so long as he admitted those which are related to have been done in ancient times: therefore he found it necessary to treat the primitive ages with as little ceremony as the

[1] *Introd.* xcii. [2] *Præf.* vi. [3] *Introd.* xxxix. [4] p. xcvi.

present 3

present; and to cast off at once all the holy Fathers of the Church, as so many credulous fools or crafty knaves. An experiment, as he terms it, big indeed with consequences; [1] but 'of the greatest importance to the protestant religion, and the sole expedient which can effectually secure it from being gradually undermined, and finally subverted by the efforts of *Rome*.' [2]

§ 3. But now that the primitive Fathers are thus set aside, as men of no credit; and all those props broken down, which, for so many hundred years, have upheld the cause of popery; it will be proper to inquire what support remains for the protestant religion to rest upon. The bible, to be sure, the bible only is the religion of Protestants. And therefore the Doctor tells us, the design of his treatise is 'to fix the religion of Protestants on its proper basis, that is, on the sacred scriptures:' [3] and to give some check to the credit of ecclesiastical antiquity, which has 'no other tendency, nor can have any other effect, but to throw us again into the arms of the *Romish Church*.' [4] 'It has always been considered, says he, as a fundamental principle of the reformation, that the scriptures are a compleat rule both of faith and manners; and as such, are clear also and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Christian. In this all protestant Churches agree, how much soever they may differ in any other article.' [5] One would be apt to imagine that he intended this as a sneer on the protestant Churches, only that he has sufficiently manifested his boundless zeal for the reformation, in the whole prosecution of this work. For is [1] Praef. i. [2] p. iii. [3] Introd. cxi [4] cix [5] xcvi. it

it not a strange thing that they should divide into so many separate communions, and wrangle and disagree about every article of the christian doctrine; when at the same time they pretend that they follow nothing but the bible, and that this bible is clear and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Christian? But I shall leave this part of the argument, and proceed to take a view of the fabrick which the Doctor has raised upon this sandy foundation.

Having settled his principle, that the bible only is the religion of Protestants, he goes on thus: 'And if this be true, then whatever be the characters of the ancient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught and practised in any age of the Church, is a matter wholly indifferent.' [1] Now I appeal to any person of common sense, whether it will not be very prejudicial to the protestant cause, if it can be fairly made out that the immediate successors of the Apostles taught a different faith from that which Protestants profess. Which of the two may, in reason, be judged most likely to understand the genuin doctrine of Christ and of his Apostles? A private Christian, at the distance of near seventeen hundred years, without any other help but his own natural capacity, and the bible? Or the bishops and priests of the Church, who besides having the bible from the first hand, and being endued with natural capacity, had personally conversed with the Apostles, had been fully instructed by them, had seen their practice, and had moreover been strengthened with the grace of *holy orders*, to enable them to preserve the depositum of faith, and to deliver it down sound

[1] *Introd. xcvi.*

and

and entire to their successors? Whoever impartially considers this matter, must needs see, that the advantage is wholly on the side of those who were taught by the Apostles themselves: and therefore that what they taught and practised, ought not to be looked upon as a matter of indifference.

Besides, a man must be blind not to see what is the tendency of this professed contempt of the primitive Fathers. If the bishops, and priests, and doctors of the Church were men of such abandoned principles, that they commenced jugglers and impostors immediately after the death of the Apostles, as Doctor *Middleton* pretends they did: why may not some other learned Doctor start up, and tell us, that the juggling trade began before the death of the Apostles? If any one be so disposed, he may support this wild assertion by the very same argument which *Middleton* has made use of to trace up this pretended imposture even unto the age of the apostolick Fathers. The method he has followed is this. First he settles it as a principle, though he has not the least proof for it, that the miracles of the fourth age were all forgeries. Then he takes that age for his footing or ground to stand upon: 'for this discovery, says he, of the state of the fourth century, will reflect fresh light on our searches, both backwards and forwards; and from its middle situation, give us a clearer view, as well into the earlier, as the later ages'. [1] And by the help of this light, he fondly imagines it may be discovered, that all the miracles of each foregoing century, up to the times of the Apostles, were cheats, no less than those of the fourth.

[1] *Introd.* lxxvi.

The reasons he gives for it are these: 'First, when we reflect on that surprizing confidence and security, with which the principal Fathers of the fourth age have affirmed as true, what they themselves had either forged, or what they knew at least to be forged; it is natural to suspect, that so bold a defiance of sacred truth, could not be acquired, or become general at once; but must have been carried gradually to that height, by custom and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear. Secondly, this suspicion will be strengthened by considering that this age, in which Christianity was established by the civil power, had no real occasion for any miracles.....So that it must have been a rash and dangerous experiment, to begin to forge miracles, at a time, when there was no particular temptation to it; if the use of such fictions had not long been tried, and the benefit of them approved and recommended by their ancestors, who wanted every help, towards supporting themselves under the pressures and persecutions with which the powers on earth were afflicting them. Thirdly, if we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with those of the earlier ages, we shall observe the same characters of zeal and piety in them all; but more learning, more judgment and less credulity in the later Fathers. If these then be found, either to have forged miracles themselves, or to have propagated what they knew to be forged.....it will naturally excite in us the same suspicion of their predecessors'. [1]

[1] Introd. lxxxiv.

Thus

Thus, by the help of this false principle, that the Fathers of the fourth century were all knaves, he works himself up into a suspicion, that their predecessors were no better, if not worse, in every age, up to the times of the Apostles. And now we may expect soon to see some other suspicious inquirer start up, and take his footing as high as our doctor has prepared the ground for him; in order to take a view into the very acts of the Apostles, and see if he can not there discover the first source of the cheat, to the great satisfaction of all unbelievers. The same principles and the same suspicions will carry the discovery as high as the most sanguin freethinker can desire.

But if we look a little more narrowly into this system, it will manifestly appear that the bible, the whole religion of all protestant Churches, must of necessity fall a sacrifice to it. For if the ancient Fathers of the Church, from the beginning, were men of such characters as he has represented them to have been; if nothing candid or impartial can be expected from them; it is very evident that they deserve no credit in religious matters: and if that be true, I defy ten thousand *Middletons* to prove that we have any inspired writings at all, or to distinguish such as are, from others which are not inspired.

To set this matter in a clear light; it must be observed, that before an infidel, for example, can be brought to believe any article of our faith, it must be proposed to him, in such a manner as to render it *credible*: for it is rash, to give assent to any article whatever, before the *credibility* of it is made apparent. Now, how can it be made appear that the four gospels, which we receive, are the same as were delivered to the Church by the Apostles

Apostles and disciples of Christ? We have no arguments for it, previous to divine faith, but such as rest on the authority of the Fathers and rulers of the Church in all ages. But is the authority of these Fathers sufficient, to render the thing credible? Is their testimony of so much weight, that it would be unreasonable to refuse giving our assent to what they attest? How can that be, if they were men of no credit? How can any one reasonably believe, on the testimony of men from whom nothing candid or impartial can be expected? Thus, by giving such a character of every foregoing age, he has utterly destroyed all *human faith* in religious matters; and without human faith, for the ground work, there are no motives of credibility, whereby unbelievers may be led to divine faith.

To elude the force of this objection, he confesses that the primitive writers are of some use and service, in transmitting to us the genuine books of the holy scriptures. ‘ Yet this is not owing, says he, to any particular sanctity or sagacity of those ancient times, but to the notoriety of the thing, and the authority with which the books themselves were received from their first publication, in all Churches.’ [1]

The fallacy of this answer will sufficiently appear to every one, who is but a little versed in ecclesiastical history. For there was not, in all ages, that constant and unanimous consent, nor that notoriety of which he speaks, with regard to some books which are declared by the thirty nine articles, and, I presume, were received by him, as canonical scripture. The authority of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, of that of St. *James*,

[1] *Introd. cxii.*

of the book of *Revelations*, was for a considerable time rejected or doubted by many learned men; till at last, the Church ascertained their authenticity, by declaring which was the true tradition concerning the canon of inspired writings. Now this tradition must, of necessity, have come through the hands of the Fathers of the Church in all ages; and the distinguishing of it from every other false tradition, or mistake, must be owing to their vigilance and sincerity, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost. It is manifest therefore, that we are bound to rely on their testimony, in order to distinguish the inspired writings from those which are not genuin. And if their joint attestation be sufficient to ascertain a matter of this consequence; why may not it be relied on, as to other points of doctrine and practice? Surely, what they taught and practised ought not to be deemed wholly indifferent to a Christian; though the Doctor says it is so to the protestant religion. Strange it is, that to them who acknowledge the bible only for their religion, it should be a matter of no concernment, to know whether they have the genuin bible, or not!

Besides, if the Fathers of the Church were so wicked, that they would stick at nothing to promote their cause, and so artful, that they could effectually deceive the world in their days; who can assure us, that they have not corrupted the sacred scripture, or delivered down to us some forged pieces of their own, under the sanction of inspired writings? Every thing, that comes through such hands, may well be looked upon as precarious and uncertain.

To this he answers, ' that the objection is trifling and groundless, and that the authority of

of

- of those books does not depend upon the faith
- of the Fathers, or of any particular set of men,
- but on the general credit and reception which
- they found, not only in all the Churches, but
- with all the private Christians of those ages,
- who were able to purchase copies of them.' [1]

Unluckily for himself, he has confuted this answer in another place, where he enlarges upon the prodigious difficulty, and almost impossibility, of procuring copies of books in those days, especially among the poor Christians. But I shall pass by this, and look into the substance of his answer.

The authority of those books, he tells us, does not depend on the faith of the *Fathers*, or any particular *set of men*, but on the general reception they found in *all Churches*, and with all *private Christians*. Here we have the *Fathers*, *the Churches*, and *private Christians*, represented as three distinct bodies or sets of men. What were those Churches, but the Fathers with the private Christians, the pastors with their flocks? Or who were those private Christians, but the inferior members of the church, who with the bishops, as their head under Christ, made up the whole body?

To open this matter a little which he has endeavoured to wrap up in an unmeaning obscurity; let it be observed, that the original authority of the scriptures is derived from the Holy Ghost inspiring the sacred writers: and that they have such authority and that we have the same genuine books, is known by the testimony of the pastors and bishops of the Church in all ages, to whose care the Apostles committed the whole

[1] Inq. 190.

sacred

sacred depositum of faith. But the general good reception they met with from the private Christians, was subsequent to, and dependant on, the grounds and motives they had for believing them to be authentick: which grounds and motives were proposed and laid open to them, by their teachers. So that the ascertaining of tradition rests, under God, principally on the authority of the Bishops and Fathers of the Church, who are by divine appointment made the guardians of our faith. But, to pretend that no credit is due to the Fathers, and to rely wholly on the private Christians, is very ridiculous. It is placing the feet where the head should be. It contradicts reason itself. For if the private Christians had so great a reverence for the holy scriptures, that we may be assured they never would have suffered them to be corrupted; I think we may reasonably say the same of the holy Fathers, who were their teachers.

Besides, I believe the doctor would be hard put to it, to find out what were the sentiments of private Christians, in those early ages; unless he gather them out of the writings of the ancient Fathers. So that he may chuse which side he pleases: either to acquiesce in the authority of the Fathers, and give up his cause: or to question their veracity, and find out some other method of ascertaining the inspired writings, better than that of recurring to the private Christians, whose sentiments he can know nothing of, unless he believe the Fathers.

Nor does he mend the matter, when he adds, that the preservation of the books of the new testament is effectually secured by the divinity of their character, and the religious regard which

was paid to them by all the sects and parties of Christians; and above all, by the mutual jealousies of those very parties, which were perpetually watching over each other, to prevent any corruption of those sacred books [1]. For how can this religious regard, for the scriptures, be reconciled with the character he has given of those primitive Fathers, who would stick at nothing, to promote their cause, and would, of course, be more strongly tempted to corrupt those books, by which they might hope to forward their designs, more than by any other contrivance whatsoever. And to what purpose is it, to alledge specious reasons, about opposite parties watching over each other, to prevent all corruption; when it is certain fact, that numberless corruptions were attempted, and variety of spurious books published, under the names of the Apostles, by hereticks, whose wicked designs were detected and defeated by the vigilance of the holy Fathers. And since they used so much care and watchfulness, to preserve uncorrupted the genuin books of scripture; we cannot reasonably doubt, but they were as watchful, to preserve the true interpretation and meaning of those books, which they had equally received from the Apostles.

But if any one, after all, imagines that the doctrine of the primitive Fathers is a matter indifferent; let him try whether he can find any other rule, whereby to ascertain the sacred writings. To a Catholick the point is very clear, from the decision of the Church guided by the Holy Ghost, a decision not arbitrary, nor made at random, but grounded on the constant tra-

[1] *Introd.* 192.

dition of the Fathers and bishops of all ages. But to a *Middleton*, who values not a rush what all the Fathers say, every thing, which has come through their hands, must be precarious and uncertain.

And indeed, he is forced at last to make an open confession of it. For after having called the objection groundless and trifling, he concludes in such a manner, as shews that he was convinced of the insufficiency of his answer. I will give it in his own words; because they will best discover the fatal end to which his principles lead.

‘ But I may go, says he, a step farther, and venture to declare, that if we should allow the objection to be true, it cannot in any manner hurt my argument: for if it be natural and necessary, that the craft and credulity of witnesses should always detract from the credit of their testimony; who can help it? Or on what is the consequence to be charged, but on the nature and constitution of things, from which it flows? Or if the authority of any books be really weakened by the character I have given of the Fathers, will it follow from thence that the character must necessarily be false, and that the Fathers were neither crafty nor credulous? That surely can never be pretended; because the craft and credulity which are charged upon them must be determined by another sort of evidence; not by consequences, but by facts; and if the charge be confirmed by these, it must be admitted as true, how far soever the consequences may reach’ [1].

[1] *Inq.* 192.

This is plain dealing. So the whole controversy ends here; that we must give up the sacred scriptures themselves, with a cold *who can help it*. Thus has the Doctor fixed the religion of Protestants on its proper basis, and by this inquiry shut them all up in a dilemma. For on one side, to maintain that the Fathers of the Church were men of so vile characters that nothing candid or impartial can be expected from them, is a matter ' of the ' greatest importance to the Protestant religion, ' and the sole expedient which can effectually se- ' cure it from being gradually undermined and ' finally subverted by the efforts of *Rome*' [1]. But on the other side, if the Fathers did justly deserve to be represented in these black colours, their testimony is nothing worth; and from thence it will follow, that we know not whether we have any genuin scriptures at all, and the bible, in which so much confidence is placed, must be reduced to the low condition of a book of precarious and uncertain authority. For who can help it? If the consequence will follow, it must be admitted, how far foever it may reach. Thus it appears, that the protestant religion, and the bible, cannot stand together, and the very arguments, which alone can ascertain the authority of those sacred writings, must naturally lead us, by the confession of this protestant Doctor, into the arms of the catholick Church.

So there is nothing left to our choice, but to be either *Catholicks* or *Free-thinkers*. In truth, a sad alternative in these our days. For if we chose the latter, our consciences tell us that we must suffer eternally in the next world, where the fire is never quenched, and where the worm ne-

[1] *Præf.* iii.

ver dies. But if we embrace the former, we must suffer, in this life, under many pressures, pointed at in the streets as the outcast of men, traduced as idolaters and followers of *Antichrist*, nay even misrepresented as declared enemies of the holy scriptures, whereas we are the only men who can and do support their authority.

Here I might dismiss the argument, and resign this precarious basis of religion, to be enjoyed by the *Van Dales*, the *Le Clercs*, and the *Middletons*. But I cannot leave it, without first observing, that he lies under a great mistake when he says, that the force of his argument is to be tried by *facts*, and not by *consequences*. For surely it may be tried both ways. A false consequence cannot flow from a true principle: if the consequence be false, the principle must be false of course. Now, every Christian knows, that this consequence, allowed by him, of the doubtful authority of the bible, is false; and therefore may, without being at the pains of looking into a long detail of facts, readily conclude, that the principle is false also.

§. 4. Thus you see to what pernicious concessions he is driven, in order to maintain his argument against the reality of miracles, contrary to the positive attestations of the holy Fathers of the Church. He had reason to call it an argument big with consequences, seeing that it strikes at the very root of Christianity; and as such, could not fail of alarming all serious men, on its first appearance in publick. Accordingly, it was immediately opposed by several learned writers of the same profession, who have indeed fully proved against him, that the miraculous powers did really con-

Other sys-
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tinue in the Church, for some ages after the Apostles; but as to the term of that continuance, they have left us entirely in the dark: as have all others, of the same communion, who handled the subject of miracles, before this particular controversy arose. Most of them do indeed fix some period of time, at which they would willingly suppose that those powers were withdrawn: but in this, they seem to be influenced by convenience, more than by truth; each one pitching upon such a period as will best answer his own purpose, and be most agreeable to that system of religion which he has adopted.

The most prevailing opinion among Protestants is, that the miraculous powers continued through the three first centuries, and then were withdrawn at the beginning of the fourth; or at least as soon as Christianity was established by the civil power: because, say they, after that time there was no farther occasion for them.

But how can these writers assure us that, after that time, there was no farther occasion worthy of a divine interposition? Has God any where revealed what are the occasions, and only occasions, on which he will afford his extraordinary assistance? With equal reason might it be said, that after the children of *Israel* were brought out of *Egypt*, and put in possession of the promised land, there was no longer any occasion for miracles among them. Yet the word of God bears witness, that many great ones were wrought after that period, by the prophets *Elias*, *Eliseus*, *Isaias* and others. By which we see, that, though the restoring of the *Israelites* to freedom, and the promulgation of the law, were great occasions of miracles, at that time, yet they were not the only

only occasions ; since miracles were wrought, after those ends were obtained. So, if we were disposed to argue from parity of reason, we might infer, that, after the conversion of the *Roman* empire was effected by the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, there are no grounds to conclude, that all miracles were to cease for the future.

But, in effect, the continuance of the miraculous powers is a point of history, not to be determined by imaginary suppositions of our own framing, but by historical monuments. If it were proved, by the attestations of sufficient witnesses, that, after the establishment of Christianity by the civil power, miracles had wholly ceased ; then indeed there would be some room, for assigning probable reasons for that cessation. But if the arguments which prove the continuance of them, after that period, be equally strong and cogent, as those which convince us that they subsisted before, we must give an equal assent to both, unless we would act inconsistently with ourselves. We believe a *Justin*, an *Origen*, a *Tertullian*, when they relate the miracles which were wrought in their days. And shall we, for the sake of an arbitrary hypothesis, give the lie to a *Basil*, a *Chrysostom*, an *Ambrose*, a *Jerome*, an *Austin*, illustrious Fathers, who flourished after the conversion of the *Roman* Empire, and all unanimously bear witness to the continuance of miracles, in their times ? Let the impartial reader judge, whether there doth not appear more of party zeal, than of reason, in such a proceeding. And indeed, I believe one may venture to affirm, that the true cause, why no credit must be given to miracles positively attested by these venerable

rable Saints, is, because they are agreeable to the doctrine of the *Catholick Church* and irreconcileable with that of the reformation. A system of religion is first adopted, and then all miracles, though ever so well attested, which clash with that system, are roundly declared to be forgeries.

Thus again, Mr. *Whiston* contends, that the true miraculous powers ceased, when the *Athanasian* heresy, as he calls it, was established by the second general Council, held at *Constantinople* about A. D. 381. And that, as soon as the Church became *Athanasian*, *Antichristian* and *Popish*, then the devil subtitituted his own cheating powers, in their stead. This, to be sure, will give entire satisfaction to all those who have, with Mr. *Whiston*, adopted the *Arian* heresy: but the rest of the world will call it *begging the question*. That the miracles wrought in the Church were *Popish* and *Athanasian*, since he is pleased so to call them, we shall not deny: but that they were therefore *Antichristian*, is more than he, and all the other enemies of *Christ*, will ever be able to prove. Nor can we understand, how the devil could possibly lend men the power of working so great miracles, as are attested to have been wrought after the year 381. Are not the restoring of sight to the blind, and the raisng of the dead to life, works which no man can do, unless God be with him? Or if wicked men, by the help of the devil's cheating power, could raise the dead to life after the year 381, why could not they have done it before? And if they could have done it before, how could such miracles be alledged, as they are in holy scripture, to evince the truth of that doctrine, which Christ and his Apostles taught?

Besides,

Besides, it must appear very strange, to every candid inquirer, that God should withdraw his extraordinary assistance from the Church, at a time when the devil began to exert his cheating powers against it, in a stronger and more delusive manner than ever he had done before.

This hypothesis being therefore set aside, as groundless and inconsistent; others, among the Protestants, have acknowledged a succession of miracles to the end of the fourth century, and some to the end of the fifth, of whom Dr. *Middleton* speaks thus: ‘These eminent Divines (Dr. *Waterland* and Dr. *Chapman*) pursuing their several systems, and ambitious of improving still upon each other’s discoveries, seem unwarily to have betrayed the protestant cause, by transferring the miraculous powers of the Church, the pretended insigns of truth and orthodoxy, into the hands of its enemies. For it was in these very primitive ages, and especially in the third, fourth and fifth centuries, those flourishing times of miraculous powers, as Dr. *Chapman* calls them, in which the chief corruptions of Popery were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now see’ [1].

By these corruptions he means, as he tells us, *the institution of Monks, the use of pictures and images and reliques, the sign of the cross, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, the mixing of water with the eucharistick cup, the sending of part of the consecrated elements to the absent, their stililing the action in which the blessed sacrament is consecrated, a dreadful solemnity, tremendous mystery, sacrifice of the*

[1] *Introd.* li.

body and blood of Christ; which terms, he confesses, are a description of that sacrifice of the mass, which Catholicks offer at this day, both for the living and the dead. In short, the force of truth obliges him to acknowledge so great a resemblance between the present catholick Church and those primitive ages, that he is afraid lest we should imagine him inclined to abjure the reformation. ‘ But some, says he, will be apt to suspect that I am really defending the corruptions of that Church, by assigning them an origin so ancient and venerable: and the suspicion indeed may seem plausible, since I have been saying little else, but what the Papists themselves would say on the same occasion. Yet it is no more than what fact and truth oblige me to say; and no controversy, I hope, will ever heat me, or prejudice bias me so far, as to make me deny or dissemble, what the conviction of my own mind requires me to confess. But whatever advantages the *Romanists* may hope to reap from this concession, it really gives them none at all. Our dispute with them is not, how ancient, but how true their doctrines and practices are: and if they are not derived from Christ or his Apostles, nor founded in the holy scriptures, it is wholly indifferent, to us Protestants, from what age they drew their birth, whether it was from the four first, or the four last centuries of the Church’ [1].

So far he is in the right, that the main question is, whether our doctrines are derived from Christ and his Apostles, or not: but he is greatly in the wrong when he says, that it matters not how ancient they are: for what better method can be

found, whereby we may distinguish whether they are derived from Christ or not, than by tracing them up, through the most early ages, to the times of the Apostles ? He himself has traced them up within the compass of the four first centuries : they were then publickly professed and taught by the bishops, whom the Holy Ghost had set over the Church of God to govern it. These eminent pastors were persuaded, that such doctrines were really derived from the Apostles of Christ ; and as they were, by so many hundred years, nearer to the fountain head, we cannot help thinking they were better able to distinguish the ancient truth from the corruptions of it, than a Luther or a Calvin were, in the sixteenth century.

But to proceed. Another Protestant Divine, Dr. *Berriman*, acknowledges the continuance of miracles still later. For speaking of some which are recorded in the dialogues of St. *Gregory the Great*, he says, that he sees not why we should dispute the facts, unless it could be proved, as it certainly cannot, that miracles were then ceased. To which Dr. *Middleton* subjoins : ‘ Thus the ‘ miraculous powers of the Church are expressly ‘ avowed by him, to the end even of the sixth ‘ century, in which Popery had gained a full ‘ establishment : yet this Protestant Divine cannot ‘ conceive the least reason to dispute the mira- ‘ culousness of those facts which established it ; ‘ nay defies any man to prove that miracles were ‘ yet ceased in this Popish age ’ [1].

Now, to sum up the whole of this matter, according to the lights which these protestant antagonists have afforded us. It may be observed that Dr. *Middleton* has proved, by arguments of

[1] *Introd. lxxxi.*

the greatest weight, that if we allow any real miracles to have been wrought in the Church, since the days of the Apostles, we must of consequence admit Popery; for that the practices and tenets of the catholick Church are evidently supported by those miracles. And so far we are convinced he is in the right. But the arguments which he has brought, to persuade us that all the miracles, recorded by the primitive Fathers, were down-right cheats and forgeries, are so very weak, and trifling, that he has left all the advantage manifestly on the catholick side. On the other hand several eminent protestant Divines have, with great learning, and to full satisfaction, proved that the miraculous powers did subsist, in the Church, for some ages after the Apostles. So that we are at liberty to make all the use we can of those miracles, which Dr. *Middleton* hath shewn to be so very disadvantageous, and even destructive, to the protestant cause.

The main question resumed § 5. But the great question, about the continuance of these miraculous powers, still returns. We have seen how they have been brought down through the fifth and sixth centuries: now it remains to be considered whether we are to stop there, or whether we may not come down still lower; and if so, where we are to stop at last.

The continuance of miracles attested in every age. In order to open a road whereby we may come at the truth, I shall begin with what Dr. *Middleton* has already observed on this subject. ' As far, says he, as the Church-historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history, so constantly, explicitly and unanimously affirmed by them

them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages, from the earliest Father who first mentions them, down to the time of the reformation. Which same succession is still farther deduced by persons of the most eminent character, for their probity, learning and dignity in the *Romish* Church, to this very day. So that the only doubt, which can remain with us, is ; whether the Church-historians are to be trusted or not : for if any credit be due to them in the present case, it must reach either to all, or to none : because the reason of believing them in any one age, will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the character of the persons attesting, or the nature of the things attested' [1]. And in another work. 'It is allowed by all Christians that the miraculous gifts, which are mentioned in the gospel, continued in the Church thro' the Apostolic age : and it is affirmed by the Fathers and Church-historians, that they subsisted still in the same manner, after the days of the Apostles, and were openly exerted in every succeeding age, down even to the present ; which is now the prevailing opinion in much the greatest part of the Christian world' [2].

This therefore we may proceed upon, as a fact which stands equally confessed on all fides : That a continual succession of historians and other grave writers have borne witness to the working of many miracles, through every age, down to the present. And here the controversy must needs be at an end, unless our adversaries can demonstrate that such witnesses are absolutely unworthy of credit.

[1] Pref. xv.

[2] Remarks on Observ. p. 37.

To deny that their testimony is good and valid, for no other reason but because it tends to the confirmation of Popery, as it is called, will not serve their purpose? For what man, in his sober senses, doth not see that this is to beg the question, not to prove it? If miracles, attested by unexceptionable witnesses, serve to confirm the catholick faith; it will follow, in spite of all that can be said against it, that the catholick faith ought to be embraced; because there is sufficient testimony that it is supported by the hand of God, and authenticated with the broad seal of truth and orthodoxy.

Nor will it be to any better purpose, to reject this positive attestation of so many witnesses, on account of the incredibility of the facts which they relate? For Dr. Middleton will tell them, that such facts are not more incredibile in the eighteenth century, than in the third. And we shall tell both parties, that they are not more incredibile, either in the eighteenth or the third century, than many facts which are recorded in holy scripture, of which neither he nor they make any doubt. Is the raising of the dead, or the restoring of sight to the blind, more incredibile, of itself, in one age, than in another? It is indeed always above the reach of nature; so it was in the first century, as much as it is in the eighteenth: but it is, at all times, easy to be done by a supernatural interposition of the hand of God. And when such miraculous works are well attested, we ought not to reject them because they are extraordinary; but we ought to confess that *this is the finger of God.* Here we may apply the words of Dr. Berriman quoted above, viz. that we have no reason to dispute the facts, on account

count of the miraculousness or natural incredibility of them, unless it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were then ceased. So that before you can, with any appearance of reason, deny a fact, on account of it's being miraculous, you must first make it appear that the miraculous gifts were withdrawn from the Church, at the time when such fact is related to have happened.

But whatever age you pitch upon, there is no possibility of making this appear. Even the Protestants, who would fain persuade us that these gifts have long since utterly ceased, yet cannot agree among themselves, about the time, when the cessation of them commenced: nor have they been able to assign any probable criterion, by which we may declare them to have proceeded thus far, and no farther. Neither scripture nor tradition tell us that they shall continue for so many ages, and no longer. Nor do we find, in the histories of times past, any account of their cessation. There is not any one age, in which the Church-historians are silent upon the matter. There is not one, in which they do not openly assert the continuance of such miraculous works, speaking of them, not in doubtful, ambiguous terms, but full and home to the point.

Nothing therefore remains, but either to acquiesce in the authority of such a cloud of witnesses, or else to dispute their veracity and understanding. Dr. Middleton who equally rejects all miracles, except those of the scriptures, of course makes very free with the characters of all christian writers who come after the Apostles. And indeed all other Protestants must do the same; only with this difference, that whereas he taxes all

all the Bishops and Fathers, without exception, with forgery or folly; others may allow them to have been men of sense and probity, at least down to that period of time, at which they are severally pleased to fix this imaginary cessation; but that, after such period, as for instance, the conversion of the Roman empire, or the 5th or 6th century, they all immediately commenced knaves or fools.

But then they may be assured, it will give us but a bad specimen of the justice of their cause, when we see that, in order to maintain it, they are obliged to speak ill of the Saints of God, to detract from their real merits, to seek to blacken the reputation of numberless worthy men, who died possessed of a 'good name, and have maintained it through succeeding ages. An attempt which is criminal in itself, and of a very evil tendency, serving only to bring virtue and religion into disrepute, and commonly made use of, as a necessary step, to introduce immorality and irreligion.

Besides, whoever attempts to rob those holy men of the good name which they have been so long possessed of, will find it a difficult task; in truth, too difficult to afford any probability of success; except it be among the ignorant part of mankind, who pin their faith on the Doctor's sleeve, or with those whom nothing pleases but slander and diffamation. For whoever will but look candidly into the histories of the times, when those holy men lived, may discover, that it was their integrity, and the purity of their lives, which gained them the esteem of all who knew them, and the veneration of after-ages. And the valuable writings of many of them, which are still preserved, will be everlasting monuments to prove that

that they wanted neither judgment nor learning. So that every thing concurs to shew, that they were sufficiently qualified to be witnesses of the facts which they relate, and that their evidence is as convincing, as human testimony can possibly be. Even Dr. *Middleton* himself, though he wanted neither good will to discover, nor art and sophistry to set off their weaknesses in the blackest colours, has not been able to make out any one material point against them : unless it be, that the repeated injurious appellations, which he has bestowed upon them, are to stand for a proof, that they really deserved such treatment. And indeed, I do not know whether an unwary reader, who meets with such things so often repeated, may not at last imagine them to be true, and forget to inquire for the proof.

Before we proceed any farther, it will be proper to observe in what manner he states the question. ‘ The present question, says he, concerning the reality of the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts pretended to have been produced by those powers, and of the witnesses who attest them. If either part be infirm, their credit must sink in proportion ; and if the facts especially be incredible, must of course fall to the ground : because no force of testimony can alter the nature of things ’ [1]. What he means by this, I cannot conceive, unless he has unwarily let us into a secret, that he believes no more of the gospel miracles, than he doth of those which are recorded to have been wrought afterwards. For, certain it

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is, that the force of gospel testimony doth oblige us to believe several things which are contrary to the course of nature. Besides, in another work he positively asserts the insufficiency of this rule: for, speaking of the rejecting of miracles, on account of the pretended incredibility of such facts; he says, that this 'is too precarious a way of reasoning to give any satisfaction; because what seems incredible to one, may seem credible to another' [1].

But to go on with his words. 'The credibility of facts, continues he, lies open to the trial of our reason and senses; but the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles, wholly concealed from us; and though in many cases it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none can it certainly be known' [2]. Here again is something very extraordinary. If we are to proceed in this inquiry, upon reasonable presumptions only; I believe every Christian will allow, that all reasonable presumptions are in favour of the primitive Fathers, who have been so long in possession of a good name, and have been, for so many ages, revered by all the world, for their virtues and learning. And the Doctor would have acted a part more agreeable to decency and to religion, if he had put the best construction on some trifling mistakes which they made, and not attempted to blacken their characters with the odious names of *cheats* and *impostors*, when, by his own confession, it cannot certainly be known that they deserved such treatment. But there is another thing which, in my opinion, bears still harder upon this assertion of his: which is, that if the

[1] Remarks on Jesuit-Cabal p. 40.

[2] Praef. ix.

credibility of witnesses can in no case be certainly known ; he must allow, that it cannot *certainly* be known that St. Matthew is a credible witness of the facts which he relates in his gospel, and that we can have no more than *a reasonable presumption* in favour of his credibility. In consequence of which, he must either acknowledge, that a reasonable presumption in favour of a witness is sufficient to render the facts, which he attests, *absolutely credible* ; or else he must give up the credibility of the gospel witnesses and of all that they say.

§. 6. I shall now proceed to lay down some few rules, relating to the authority of witnesses, and the degree of credit which is due to their testimony. But I must first take notice of what the Doctor says, in the beginning of his introductory discourse : That the real continuance of miracles in the Church, through all ages, is believed by the Catholicks as an indisputable fact, *or an article rather of the christian faith.* By this it appears, that he either misunderstood, or has wilfully misrepresented our belief : for we receive nothing as an article of christian faith, except what God has revealed and made known to us, either by the inspired writings or by apostolical tradition. Hence we receive all the miracles recorded in holy scripture, as matters of faith. But as to such miracles as are related by the primitive Fathers and Church historians, we give credit to them in proportion to the authority by which they are supported ; more to some, and less to others, according as the arguments are more or less convincing. For the better understanding of which, it must be observed, that as *divine faith* relies on

What credit is due to witnesses.

the word or testimony of God; so *human faith* relies on the word or testimony of man. Now particular facts, such as the working of a miracle in the second, the third, or fourth century, being no otherwise known to us than by the testimony of man, can not be raised to any higher degree of certainty than that of *human faith*. But, at the same time, they are so well supported by human testimony, that they may reasonably be admitted as *indisputable facts*, as far at least as the nature of the question will bear.

All the certainty which we can have, of the existence of such miraculous facts, must be either *physical* or *moral*: *Physical certainty* is that which depends on *our own senses*: so the *Jews*, who saw *Lazarus* raised to life, were physically certain that our Lord wrought a miracle. And in many cases the Fathers and Church-historians were physically certain of the miracles which they relate; because they were eye-witnesses of them. *Moral certainty* is that which depends on *informations* received from prudent and able witnesses. So an unbeliever, before he arrives at divine faith, may be made morally certain of the truth of the gospel-miracles, on the credit of the witnesses by whom they are attested. So may we be morally certain of the reality of the miracles related by the Fathers, on the credit of their testimony: because it is absolutely unreasonable to think, that so numerous a succession of learned and holy men, either could be deceived themselves, or would wilfully deceive us, in plain facts which they attest.

With regard to the authorities, which are alledged to prove the reality of miracles, there are several things to be observed relating to the credit which is due to them. As first, Those who compile

pile histories from ancient monuments, deserve credit as far as their own judgment and veracity, and the proofs which they bring, may require.

Secondly, When persons of good credit relate facts upon information received from others of less credit; it is a sign they discovered no cheat in the matter, but judged them probable at least: and on that score they deserve some credit.

Thirdly, If a writer relates an historical fact at second hand; not as having seen it himself, but as having received it from an eye-witness; and both of them be men of indisputable judgment and veracity; we have reason sufficient to give credit to it. So if St. *Austin* had told us, that St. *Ambrose* had informed him of any particular miracle to which he had been an eye-witness; I do not think the testimony would have lost much of its force, by coming through a second hand. In one sense, I am of opinion it would rather have gained something, by having found belief with the second, who was as good a judge of what he ought to reject or admit, as the best of us are. In some cases, I confess, a fact may lose something of its credit, by coming to us only at second hand; as when we have reason to doubt either the judgment or veracity of the second witness.

Fourthly, If persons of undoubted credit attest that any particular miracle was wrought in their presence, that they were eye-witnesses of it; their attestation ought to be admitted as the best evidence that can be had for the fact, next to that of seeing it with our own eyes.

Fifthly, But the highest degree of credit is due to those miracles which have been brought to a severe scrutiny, by a most strict examination of eye-witnesses, of parties concerned, of physicians

who had known and treated the persons before they were miraculously healed, and of all other circumstances which are capable of throwing light on such matters ; together with a serious and mature discussion of all objections which may be made against the miraculousness of the work. These I say, if there be any faith in man, after having been so discussed and approved, deserve the highest credit, as being raised to the highest degree of moral certainty that such facts can be raised to.

Now it is matter of fact, too evident to be denied, that there are many miracles related by the most eminent men, of their own knowledge ; and many which have passed through a fiery trial in the inquiries previous to the canonization of Saints. And if these may not be allowed to be absolutely certain, we must conclude, there is no such thing as faith in man.

But can the most sanguin *Middletonian* ever hope to persuade the world, that there never was, since the days of the Apostles, a Bishop in the Church, who had sense enough to distinguish a false miracle from a real one, or honesty enough to confess the truth ? The assertion is too absurd to gain belief with men of sense. That the primitive Fathers were men of found judgment, and strict veracity, is so manifest, that I do not think the Doctor himself could be ignorant of it. But he had his reasons for not acknowledging it. He had discovered that they were, all of them, favourable to the doctrine and practices of the catholick Church, and was afraid lest this discovery should open too great a glare to the publick, and exhibit Popery in too pleasing a light. There was no other resource left, but to give it a dark side, by

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representing those venerable men as fools or knaves, and so securing the reputation of Protestantism by the ruin of that of all the primitive Fathers.

But he has fallen short of his aim : Learning
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witnesses. for, notwithstanding all his bitter invectives against them, it is still no less certain than it was before, that they were highly esteemed, while living, for their great learning and other endowments ; which esteem has been preserved to them, down to this day, not only by tradition and the constant testimony of all ages, but also by their judicious writings, which always have been and ever will be a standing proof, that they were far from being weak men. Even the Pagans themselves, the Doctors favourites, confessed their superior merit in point of literature. *Porphyry*, the declared enemy of Christianity, extols the learning of *Ammonius* and of his scholar *Origen*. [1] *Libanius* the Pagan Sophist equals *St. Basil* to *Plato* for wisdom, and to *Demosthenes* for eloquence [2]. *Longinianus* and *Maximus* of *Madaura*, two heathens, in their letters to *St. Austin*, express the most profound respect for his virtues and learning [3]. And is it not a shame to see, that these very men who, for their admirable endowments, were revered by the very Pagans, are now set forth as a subject of ridicule to protestant Christians, and no better name allowed them, than that of *credulous fools* and *frantick Enthusiasts*.

His attempts against their moral character are more shameful and equally Sincerity
of the
witnesses. groundless. Their religious principles,

[1] *Euseb.* 1. 6. *hist. cxix.*
[3] *St. Aug.* *Epist. xxi.* and *xliii.*

[2] *Basil. Epist. 159.*

and the conformity of their lives to those principles, will ever be convincing proofs of their strict probity and veracity. They were disciples of a religion which forbids all lying and cheating, though the end proposed be ever so good. They did not say, as they are slandered; Let us do evil, that there may come good. No: they believed, and taught, and practised a contrary doctrine, as is evident from all the historical accounts we have of their lives. But if the Doctor doth not mistake, their writings are the surest test to try them by. For I find that he says: 'Whoever forms a judgement of any author, from any other principle, than what is grounded on the testimony of his writings, must necessarily judge from prejudice or party, or some other motive which does not flow from the love of truth' [1]. Now, do they, any where in their writings, teach, that it is lawful to cheat and deceive? Do not all their works breathe the contrary spirit of truth and sincerity? Does not St. *Justin* say: 'We will not tell a lie to save our lives?' [2]. How then could our Inquirer have formed such a judgment of them as he has, unless he had judged from prejudice or party-fury without any love of truth?

But, what must add great weight to our opinion of their having lived up to the maxims of the gospel, is, that many of them laid down their lives for their faith, by a glorious martyrdom. Which, as it was a manifest sign of their sincerity and firm persuasion of the truth of what they taught, must of course exclude all suspicion of fraud and deceit, so expressly forbidden by the

[1] *Remarks on Jesuit. Cabal* p. 96.

[2] *Apol. ad Anton. Pium.*

religion for which they died. No one can give a more convincing testimony that he truly loves God, than by dying for his honour and glory: this they did: and can we imagine that they were conscious, at the same time, of having rendered themselves hateful to him, by the most shameful forgeries? Dr. Middleton may be credulous enough to believe it: I am not. And indeed, through his whole inquiry, he has discovered a more rash and childish credulity, in judging ill of others, than any defender of miracles has done, in judging well of them.

But, to let us know his full sentiments on this head, he puts the objection to himself. 'It is urged against me, says he, that no *suspicion of craft* can reasonably be entertained against persons of so exalted a piety, who exposed themselves to persecution, and even to martyrdom, in confirmation of the truth of what they taught' [1].

In answer to this, he has filled more than twelve whole pages in vilifying the venerable martyrs of *Christ*; ascribing their holy constancy to stubbornness, pride and ambition, and confounding the true martyrs who persevered to the end, with others who, after having suffered something for their faith, fell into disorderly courses of life. A representation as uncandid as it is fatirical, says a protestant writer, (b) one nearly of the same sentiments with the Doctor, but ashamed to see him place the blessed martyrs in so unfavourable a light. However after having said all that malice or frantick zeal could suggest, to depreciate

[1] *Inquir.* 199.

(b) The author of a book intitled the *Criterion or miracles examined.*

the characters of those followers of *Christ*; he concludes by telling us, that it is not his design to detract in any manner from the real merit and just praise of those primitive martyrs: that his sole view is, 'to expose the vanity of those extravagant honours, and that idolatrous worship which are paid to them indiscriminately by the Church of *Rome*; and to shew especially, that the circumstance of their martyrdom, while it gives the strongest proof of the sincerity of their faith and trust in the promises of the gospel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge or their sagacity; nor consequently any weight to their testimony, in preference to that of any other just and devout Christian' [1].

By this answer one may guess, that the length of his invective against the martyrs, had made him forget the objection, which was, that all suspicion of craft is precluded by the circumstance of their martyrdom; to which he wisely answers, that it adds nothing to the character of their sagacity. A discovery of importance, without which perhaps the world had not yet known, that a man may be a true martyr, without any great share of learning or sagacity. It is a convincing proof however, that they were good men, and would not, on any account, have displeased God knowingly by lies and forgeries. It is a proof of their sincerity, by his own confession; and therefore must add weight to their testimony; if sincerity be a necessary qualification of a credible witness. And when knowledge and sagacity are joined with it, as they certainly were in many

[1] *Inquir.* 213.

of the eminent martyrs, then their testimony becomes full and convincing.

As to what he says, of our paying to the martyrs extravagant honours or idolatrous worship, or indeed any worship at all to them *indiscriminately*; it is absolutely false, and quite foreign to the purpose of answering the objection which he had put to himself. But he knew that an outcry against Popery would make his shameful invective go down the better. It is a threadbare contrivance to throw in a *quantum sufficit* against Popery, by way of sauce to every insipid dish of nonsense.

I cannot leave this subject without observing, that among other motives and incentives to martyrdom, enumerated by him in order to convince us, that even bad men might be animated to endure death for *Christ*, there are two which deserve particular notice. The first is, an assurance which they had of escaping purgatory. The second is, a notion generally received among them, that they should feel no pain under their tortures. ‘ The principal incentive to martyrdom, says he, was the assurance not only of an immortality of glory, and happiness in another world, in common with all other pious Christians, but of extraordinary and distinguished rewards, proportionable to the degree of their sufferings. For while the souls of ordinary Christians were to wait their doom in some intermediate state; or pass to their final bliss through a purgation by fire; it was a general belief that the martyrs were admitted to the immediate fruition of paradise. St. Cyprian speaking of the different state of the lapsed Christians, tho’ restored afterwards to the church

‘ church by penance, and of the martyrs, who
‘ had nobly suffered death or torments for the
‘ faith of Christ, says: *It is one thing to lie at
‘ mercy; another, to arrive at glory: one thing, to
‘ be thrown into prison, and not be discharged, till
‘ you have paid the uttermost farthing: another,
‘ to receive the immediate reward of your faith and
‘ virtue: one thing to be cleansed from your sins
‘ by a long course of torments, and a purgation by
‘ fire; another, to have all your sins wiped off at
‘ once by martyrdom*’. Ep. 51. [1]

I am at a loss to conceive how the Doctor could possibly dream of convincing us, by such an argument as this, that even bad men might be animated to endure a martyrdom. Could wicked men conceive an assurance of escaping the prison and pains of purgatory, of being intitled to more distinguished rewards than other pious Christians, and of being admitted to the immediate fruition of God in immortal glory, by dying in their sins? If the martyrs hoped to escape not only hell, but purgatory too, as, no doubt, they did: if they ardently desired to be speedily with Christ, and expected to receive their reward from the hands of the just judge, we may be assured they were sincere, and not conscious to themselves of any crimes, which, they could not but know, must for ever exclude them from all hopes of seeing their God in glory. Whoever lays down his life, *for the sake of coming sooner to the kingdom of heaven*, we may without hesitation affirm, that his conscience doth not reproach him with any crime. If it did; he would know it to be impossible for him to enter into bliss, in that unclean state: and no man in his senses can

[1] Inq. p. 202. 3.

dy for the sake of gaining what he knows is impossible to be gained.

Concerning the other motive, he says: 'There was another notion, diligently inculcated and generally believed at the same time, which was sufficient of itself to efface all the terrors of martyrdom, *viz.* that under all that dreadful apparatus of racks and fires, and the *seeming* atrocity of their tortures, the martyrs were miraculously freed from all sense of pain, nay felt nothing but transports of joy, from the cruelty of their tormentors' [1]. And this he would willingly persuade us, was one of those motives which had force enough sometimes to animate even bad men to endure a martyrdom.

That such miraculous relief, as is here spoken of, was sometimes granted to the martyrs, is very true; there is incontestible evidence of it in history. But it is no less evident that it was not granted to all: nor indeed was it expected by any, unless they had a foreknowledge, by divine illumination, that God would shew them that particular favour. Whereas the Doctor, to have made good his argument, ought to have proved that it was expected: by all, even by the wicked. But to bring the matter to a short issue. Either the martyrs were freed from all sense of pain under their tortures, or they were not. If he says they were; he must allow it to have been a *miracle*. If he say, they were not; how can he pretend, that they were animated to stand firm, amidst racks and fires, from an expectation that they should feel no pain; when, upon the first application of the torture the ex-

[1] *Inq.* p. 204.

perience

perience of their own senses, must needs have convinced them of the vanity of that mistaken notion?

But to go on: Another argument for the sincerity of the primitive Christians, and for the truth of what they relate concerning miracles, may be deduced from their apologies which they presented to the publick, wherein they appeal to the very heathens their enemies, and challenge them to come and see the wonderful things which were done among them. See *Tertul.* in *Apol.* Now is it likely that the Christians, had they been conscious that all those wonders were nothing but craft and fraud, would have challenged the clear-sighted heathens to bring the matter to a fair trial? Or suppose they had been so fool-hardy; could they have escaped without being shamefully detected? Yet they made such challenges, nor were their pretensions ever detected to be false, by the pagans; much less can any such detection be now made by a *Middleton*.

Le Clerc, who had undertaken the defence of *Van Dale* in this quarrel against the primitive Fathers, could find no better answer to this observation, than the two following groundless surmises. ‘Perhaps, says he, the pagans, either through contempt or neglect, did not read the books of the Christians. Perhaps also these indiscreet boasters of miracles often met with severe mortifications from the pagans, of which no account has been transmitted to posterity’ [1]. But if an empty *perhaps* can do such mighty feats, we need not wonder that in-

[1] *Biblioth. choisie* T. 22. ar. 3.

fidelity makes such a surprizing progress. It is not the cause of the primitive Fathers only, but even that of Christ and his Apostles which is affected by it: for what *Free-thinker* will stick to say, that perhaps they were all put to confusion, and their miracles detected to be false, though we have no account of it in history.

Middleton, in answer to the same objection, doth nothing more than enlarge upon *Le Clerc's* first *perhaps*. He tells us that Christianity ‘continued to be held in such contempt by the generality of the better sort, through the three first centuries, that they scarce ever thought it worth while to make any inquiry about it, or to examine the merit of its pretensions’ [1].

An observation or two, grounded on plain matter of fact, will be a full confutation of this arbitrary conjecture. *Tertullian*, in the apology where he makes that challenge to the heathens, of which we are speaking, tells them: ‘We are but of yesterday, and have already filled every place, your cities, your islands, your forts, your towns, your assemblies, your camps, your tribes, your companies, your palace, your senate, your forum; your temples only we leave to yourselves’. [2] And indeed, nothing can be more certain than that Christianity did effectually make its way, through all oppositions, persecutions, and contempt, and bring over even men of figure and fortune. And if our Doctor be so credulous as to imagine, that men of sense and discretion were induced to embrace a new religion, without ever inquiring into

[1] *Inquir.* 193.

[2] *Apol.* §. 57.

the merit of its pretensions; I think it is best to leave him to his own credulity.

Again, several heathens, as *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, &c. wrote against the Christian religion. And will he grant that these men, whom he so much admires, would expose themselves, by writing against a system of doctrine, without ever inquiring into it? Did not *Celsus* cite the writings of Christians, and boast that he knew every thing which related to them? [1]. Did not *Porphyry* write against the scriptures and the interpreters of them, and, as *Eusebius* observes, when he could make nothing out against their doctrine, utter scandalous reproaches against their persons? [2] The same contrivance as is used at this time, and in this very dispute, to depreciate Christianity and its most illustrious members.

As to what he urges, of the great difficulty there was of publishing books, and making them known to the world in those ages, when they had not the convenience of the press as we have; it is nothing to the purpose: because, though the publication of books was not then the same easy affair as it is now, yet it is matter of fact that they did publish books, and many, even private Christians, were able to purchase copies of them. I suppose he will make no difficulty of admitting this, after what he has said of the scriptures being preserved pure and genuin by the care of the private Christians, watching over their pastors and teachers, to prevent their corrupting of them.

To this difficulty of procuring books before the invention of the press, he adds the danger that

[1] Orig. L. 1. et. v.

[2] Euseb. l. 6. hist. c. xix.

would

would attend the publication of them, in those times of persecution. For which he refers to a passage taken out of St. *Justin*, which he prudently gives us in the greek only, to the end that the ignorant reader may imagine, St. *Justin* confesseth that the Christians were deterred from publishing any books, by the danger of capital punishment. The recital of the passage will serve to prevent the mistake which it is designed to occasion. ‘ Though death, says the Saint, be determined against those who teach, or confess the name of Christ, we nevertheless embrace it and teach it every where. And if you also be enemies to these words, you can do no more than kill us’ (c).

But to proceed. It being now made apparent, that the continuance of miracles in the Church is attested by numberless witnesses, against whose testimony nothing material can be alledged, it follows that we must either reject this new invented system of Dr. *Middleton*’s, or else destroy the faith and credit of all history.

To this he answers, that it is the constant cant of all zealots. It was the cry of the heathens when the gospel began to be made known among them, it was the cry of the Christians when Protestantism began, and is still urged, at this day, as the principal objection to it; ‘ that it is a mere novelty which had no existence in the world before *Luther*, contradictory to the practice of all the primitive Saints and martyrs of the ca-

(c) Καίπερ θαύματα ὁρισθέντα κατὰ τῶν διδασκόντων ή ὅλως ὀμολογήντων τὸ ἔνομα τῷ Χριστῷ, ἡμεῖς πανταχοῦ καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα καὶ διδάσκομεν, εἰ δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς ἐχθροὶ ἐπενέσθε τούτῳ τοῖς λόγοις ἡ πλεόνι δύνασθε τὸ φορεύειν. *Just. M. Apol.* 1.

‘ tholick Church, and to the unanimous consent of fifteen centuries’ [1].

Consent of all ages. I presume he would not deny that an opinion, though even false in itself, which has prevailed through many ages, will carry great weight with it, on account of its continuance. I find that he allows it in another work, where he says : ‘ The belief of nations, the testimony of ages, and the authority of fifteen centuries, are the strongest prejudices which can possibly be conceived, in favor of any controverted facts’ [2]. And in this very inquiry, he confesses that the miraculous powers were poured forth, in the fullest measure, on the Apostles, in order to inable them more easily to overrule the inveterate prejudices of *Jews* and *Gentiles* [3]. We have therefore, according to his judgment, the strongest prejudices which can possibly be conceived, in favour of the existence of miracles : prejudices, which are not to be overruled by arbitrary conjectures and surmises ; but plain, strong, and decisive arguments are necessary, to convince us that the belief of nations, the testimony of ages, the authority of almost seventeen centuries have all concurred to support a falsehood, in this particular point of the continuance of miracles. For, in order to prevail with us to lay aside these prejudices, which are not blind and groundless, but highly reasonable, he must first make it plain, by convincing proofs, that no miracles have been wrought since the days of the Apostles : till he has done that, he must give us leave to think it is much more likely that he

[1] Inq. 215.

[2] Remarks on Observ. 4.

[3] Pref. xxviii.

is mistaken', than that the whole christian world hath been in an error for near seventeen hundred years.

In relation to what he says, of our objecting to Protestantism, that it is a mere novelty, which had no existence before *Luther*. I must observe in short, that the objection is unanswerable; because every novelty in the christian faith must of necessity be an error. And the belief of nations, when urged in favour of the catholick religion against the reformers, is a much more decisive argument, than when it is urged in favour of the continuance of miracles; because the continuance of miracles is a *particular fact* which does not belong to faith, whereas the points controverted between Catholicks and Protestants are *matters of faith*, in which the Church, according to the promises of Christ, will always remain orthodox.

But, in order to shew that there is no weight in the common consent of all christian nations, he instances in the case of witchcraft. 'There is not, says he, in all history, any one miraculous fact, so authentically attested as the existence of witches. All christian nations whatsoever have consented in the belief of them..... Yet the *incredibility of the thing* prevailed, and was found at last too strong for all this force of human testimony: so that the belief of witches is now utterly extinct'.

Here we may observe how artfully he confounds two different things, viz. the existence of witches, and the laws against them. The laws which were in force against them, in this country, are abolished, on account of several abuses. But the belief of their existence still continues, at least with all who believe the bible. If he would

have looked into his own rule of faith, he might there have found that *Saul* consulted with a witch, and that he destroyed the witches and the wizards [1]. And of *Manasses* it is said, that he used *incantments and dealt with familiar spirits, and wizards* [2]. And in the book of *Deuteronomy* God lays this express command on his people. *There shall not be found among you any one . . . that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch . . . For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God shall drive them out from before thee* [3]. And shall a protestant Doctor now persuade us, that the belief of witches is extinct? He that pretends to fix the religion of Protestants on the bible, as on its proper basis, at the same time confesses that the existence of witches is too incredible to be believed.

The criterion examined. § 7. I shall conclude this first part, with some remarks on a late performance intitled the *Criterion, or miracles examined*; wherein the *ProtestantChristian* is instructed, how he may distinguish true from false miracles, by the help of certain rules there laid down. Which rules, I confess, are inconsistent with the sentiments of a *CatholickChristian*, on many accounts; but especially, because they tend to destroy the credit of the holy scriptures, by rendering their authority wholly precarious.

This author's opinion differs but little from that of Dr. *Middleton*; only, he thinks he has discovered a new method, of ascertaining the time of the cessation of miracles. 'Tho' it may be a

[1] 1. Sam. or Kings cxxviii. [2] ii. or iv Kings c. xxi.
[3] c. xviii.

matter more of curiosity than of use, says he, to endeavor to determine the exact time, when miraculous powers were withdrawn from the Church, yet I think that it may be determined with some degree of exactness. . . . I think I have it in my power, to obviate the objections of *Catholicks*, by fixing upon a period, beyond which we may be certain that miraculous powers did not subsist' [1]. But how is this important period to be discovered? Why; he only makes one modest request, viz. that we will allow him to set out with this as a principle, *that the age of christian miracles must have ceased with the age of christian inspiration* [2], and then the whole question will be at an end: for from thence it will follow, that they must have ceased at the death of the Apostles, or at least shortly after the beginning of the second century, in supposition that any of the inspired preachers did survive the last of the Apostles.

This, I confess, is an infallible method of bringing the question to a short issue; when the very point in dispute is begged as a principle. Whether miracles have ceased or not, is the subject of our controversy: that they did not cease with the closing of the gospel revelation, nor have yet ceased, we prove from the positive and repeated attestations of the most judicious and most sincere writers of the primitive, as well as later times. The only remaining question is, whether these witnesses deserve credit, or not. If he say they do not: he must of necessity have recourse to Dr. Middleton's plea, and stoutly assert that they were all knaves or fools. In which case we shall

[1] Criterion p. 389.

[2] 391.

call upon him, to declare, how he will maintain the genuin authority of his bible, for which he has no better evidence, than that it has come down to him, through the hands of so many crafty knaves, and credulous fools. I cannot suspect, that he will take refuge in that silly evasion of *Middleton's*, by pretending to place his trust in the private Christians, preferably to their pastors and teachers, especially as I find that he calls the private Christians the *ignorant many*, and the rulers of the Church, the *powerful few* [1].

But he had prepared his readers for this exact determination of the time, by laying it down, as his most important rule, as his sure criterion or test, ‘ that God never will vest men with a power of working miracles, unless such power be vested in them for this *one end*, to satisfy the world that they are really under a supernatural influence, and are to be looked upon as teachers from heaven [2]: that is, as *teachers of a new revelation of the will of God*’ [3]. But this important rule is no better than an arbitrary hypothesis, contradicted by the unanimous consent of all ages, down to this day. It is true, indeed, that whenever any preacher pretends to have an extraordinary commission from heaven, to teach a new doctrine and to abolish any thing already established by divine authority, he ought to be despised as an impostor, unless he can prove his commission by extraordinary arguments, such as miracles are. And for this very reason, *Luther* and *Calvin* were called upon, to convince the world by miracles, that they were commissioned from heaven to preach a new doctrine, and to

[1] Criterion 111. [2] Criterion p. 335. [3] 357.

abolish

abolish the sacred ministry and authority of bishops and priests, established by *Christ* and his Apostles; which because they could not do, they were justly rejected as impostors. But to say, that God never will work a miracle, by the agency of any man, unless he commission him, at the same time, to preach a new doctrine, is an opinion as groundless as it is new.

With regard to the evidence, which is necessary to support our belief of miracles, he says : ‘ of such extraordinary facts as miracles are, we have a natural right, no doubt, to expect as extraordinary an evidence : and unless the accounts of such extraordinary facts are well supported, by a degree of evidence equally extraordinary, we are not obliged to believe them to be true ’ [1]. This, if it were to be understood according to the strict meaning of the words, would imply a necessity of one miracle being wrought in confirmation of another, which would lead us into a process of miracles without end, and destroy the credibility of those, which were wrought by *Christ* and his Apostles. But, after all, it appears, that by this *extraordinary evidence*, he means no more than that *ordinary evidence* which we require, as much as he does, to render a fact indisputable. This I gather from his own words, in another place. ‘ Two qualifications must concur to establish the credibility of witnesses ; a sufficient knowlege of the matters of fact they attest, and a disposition not to falsify what they know. And when these two qualifications do concur, we think ourselves obliged to admit what is attested, as true ’ [2]. To

[1] Criterion p. 8.

[2] p. 299.

this we subscribe, and join issue upon it; being persuaded that it may be fully proved, from witnesses so qualified, that many miracles have been wrought, since the close of the gospel-revelation. I mean such witnesses whose probity and veracity are unquestionable, and who speak of facts which happened before their own eyes: of whom this author says: 'Tho' men may believe ' speculative opinions to be true, which are false, ' yet it is scarcely to be conceived, that they can ' ever so far deceive themselves as to believe ' they saw facts, which they did not really see [1].

The rules, which he gives, for discovering when miracles are deficient in point of evidence, are three. 'First we suspect, says he, the accounts ' to be false, when they are not published to the ' world, till long after the time when they are ' said to have been performed' [2].

But this rule is liable to some very material exceptions. Because the inspired writers did not publish to the world the miracles of Christ, till long after the time when he wrought them. Besides, let us suppose that St. *Ignatius*, St. *Polycarp*, or St. *Irenæus* had related to us a particular miraculous fact, of which they had been informed by their masters: must we needs suspect the truth of it, because it had never been published to the world before? Our author doth not seem to doubt the testimony of *Papias*, quoted by *Eusebius* [3], where he tells us of a person's having been raised from the dead, as a fact, the tradition of which had been handed down to him by the daughters of *Philip*. See his note on this testimony, and that of St. *Irenæus* [4]. Again, it is certain that

[1] Crit. 312. [2] p. 52. [3] Euseb. l. iii. c. 39. [4] Crit. 374.
the

the greatest Saints have endeavoured, through humility, to conceal the wonderful gifts which God had bestowed upon them; and have, by intreaties, or even by commands, prevailed upon those who knew their miraculous works, to keep them concealed; which has been one occasion, among divers others, that many such facts were not published to the world, till after their death. And though our Protestant Christian says, that for them to be silent about their miracles, is as *criminal*, as it would be in a General, who gains a victory, to make no mention of it to his Prince; we cannot agree with him on that head. Besides, his remark is wholly foreign to the purpose, because, without entering at present into a justification of their humility, it is matter of fact that they did endeavour to conceal such gifts.

His second rule is; 'We suspect them to be
false when they are not published in the place,
where it is pretended the facts are wrought, but
are propagated only at a great distance from
the supposed scene of action' [1].

If he means, that such miracles are to be doubted of, which neither are, nor ever were known, at the supposed place of action, we readily subscribe to his rule, and shall give no more credit to such facts, than he will. But we cannot understand, why the testimony of St. *Austin*, for instance, must be therefore liable to suspicion, because he published, in *Africa*, a miracle, to which he had been an eye-witness, when residing at *Milan* in *Italy*. Nor do we see any reason why the miracles of St. *Francis Xavier*, which were well known in the *East-Indies*, must be therefore rejected, because his life was written, not in the *East*, but in *Europe*.

[1] 52.

In favour of this rule he urges, ‘ that when accounts of miracles are published at a distance from the places, where the scenes of them are laid, they are published to persons who, by their situation, are necessarily deprived of the proper means of examining, what foundation there is for the pretensions : and consequently, in such cases, there is full scope for fraud and imposition to play their parts. Now with regard to reports of miracles, the very possibility of imposition createth a suspicion of it ’ [1].

For my part, I cannot see the least truth in this, that persons at a distance from the scene, and, if he pleases, from the time too, of action, are necessarily deprived of the proper means of examining into the evidence of a miraculous fact. If they are ; we must renounce the gospel miracles, together with all others which have been wrought at a distance from us. But this Gentleman himself paid no regard to this rule, as he has convinced us by his commendable endeavours to ascertain, here in *England*, the evidence of miracles wrought in *Judea*. But I may safely advance a step farther ; and affirm, that though we had not means of discovering any thing more, relating to the existence of a miracle, than that it is attested by witnesses, of competent knowledge and probity ; this alone would be sufficient, to ground a reasonable and prudent assent to the truth of it. In confirmation of which, besides his own confession [2], I might produce thousands of Protestants, among the common people, who, as I presume and hope, do firmly and reasonably believe the gospel-miracles, without any other

[1] Criter. 83.

[2] Criter. 299.

grounds

grounds, than that they are proposed to them, as worthy of belief, by their Church-guides whom they take to be credible witnesses, who have examined the matter sufficiently, and may therefore be relied on.

I cannot pass on without observing, that by this affected severity, which strains the point to such a pitch of nicety, and requires so many circumstances to be cleared up, before a miracle may be admitted as credible; the knowledge of the credibility of gospel-miracles is raised above the reach of the greater part of Protestants. For among the lower rank of people, I am convinced, very few would be able to try and approve them by this criterion. In a word, the whole work appears to be, not a sincere inquiry after truth, but a trial of skill, to display all the arguments, which art and sophistry can supply, against the truth; and will serve to justify *Jews* and *Pagans*, as well as Protestants, in their rejection of miracles.

This will appear still in a stronger light, if we consider his third rule, which is; that ' supposing the accounts to have the two foregoing qualifications (mentioned in the first and second rule) we still may suspect them to be false, if in the time when, and at the place where they took their rise, they might be suffered to pass without examination' [1]. ' Now, says he, in another place, accounts of miracles may well be supposed to have passed without examination; first, where the miracles proposed coincided with the favourite opinions or prejudices of those to whom they were reported..... Secondly,

[1] Criterion p. 52.

‘ where

‘ where the accounts were set on foot, at least
 ‘ were encouraged and supported, by those who
 ‘ alone had the power of detecting the fraud,
 ‘ and could prevent any examination [1].

According to this rule then, it is impossible that a christian bishop can be a credible witness, to his flock, of a miracle wrought in confirmation of the christian doctrine. And when a person, who alone has the power of examining into a matter of fact, positively attests the truth of it, that alone gives us a right to suspect that he is imposing a cheat upon us ; though he be as sincere and as honest as man can be.

I was at a loss to conceive how he would, in consequence of this rule, defend the testimony of the inspired writers, who certainly recommended favourite opinions, under the sanction of miracles; and that too in some cases, where it was impossible to detect the fraud, if there had been any ; as for instance, in the glorious transfiguration of our Lord, to which only three Apostles were witnesses, who did not publish it till after his resurrection. But, at last, I found that he had attempted to save their credit by this admirable remark ‘ *viz.* that the opinions recommended by the Apostles, on the credit of Jesus’s miracles, had not *always* been favorite ones. . . . their testimony therefore is, in effect, the testimony of adversaries ’ [2].

But it is of no significance, to the point in question, whether such opinions had always been favourite ones or not ; provided they were but favourite ones, at the time when the Apostles recommended them ; for that alone, according to

[1] p. 90.

[2] Crit. p. 306.

his

his rule, must needs weaken the force of their testimony. However I shall not insist on this; nor on the unreasonableness of supposing, that a man of sense and probity, who, from his infancy, has been brought up in the christian religion, can not be as competent a witness of a miracle, wrought in confirmation of Christianity, as one who had, heretofore, been a *Jew* or a *Pagan*. Without insisting on this, I say, it is very easy to shew, that our author has effectually confuted his own system, by this remark on the testimony of the Apostles. For we can produce several illustrious Fathers, who, after being converted from *Judaism* or *Paganism*, attest the continuance of miracles, in their days, long after the period which he has fixed for their cessation. Now the opinions, which they recommend, under the sanction of miracles, were not always favourite ones; their testimony therefore, as he argues, must in effect be the testimony of adversaries, and on that account free from all suspicion of imposture: especially, if we consider that, in the times of persecution, the *Pagans* wanted neither good will, nor means, to examine and detect the fraud, if any had been used. ‘Forged miracles, says he, ‘may pass current, where power and authority ‘screen them from the two nice inquiry of ex- ‘aminers. But whenever it shall happen, that ‘those who are vested with the supreme power, ‘are bent upon opposing and detecting them, ‘the progresſ which they make can be but small, ‘before the imposture is discovered, and sinketh ‘into obscurity and contempt’. Behold the force of truth: no Catholick Christian could have

spoken in stronger terms, for the reality of those miracles which were always asserted and appealed to by the primitive Christians, and never detected to be forgeries, by the persecuting Pagans.

Thus I have taken a cursory view of his three rules, by which the *Protestant Christian* is to be enabled utterly to defeat all the evidence, which the *Catholick Christian* can have, of miracles having ever been wrought in his Church, since the death of the inspired teachers. To every impartial reader, I am convinced, it will appear that the rules are highly unreasonable. Nevertheless, unreasonable as they are, they fall short of the end for which they were made: for as far as I can see, the miracles of the catholick Church are no more affected by them, than those of the gospel.

That there have been frauds we do not deny: and that the lower rank of people, Protestants as much as Catholicks, are very susceptible of idle and superstitious imaginations, is a truth not to be doubted. But, to say that the bishops of our Church either suffer or encourage any fraud, in the publishing of miracles, is a groundless calumny. On the contrary, they are watchful to prevent and detect every fraud which might be imposed on their flock, and suffer nothing to be published to them, under their authority, but what has been maturely examined, and found to be well supported. And if the Protestant Christian had been inclined to have brought the cause to a fair trial, he should have selected some of the miracles which have been examined and published by episcopal authority, and some of those which have passed a severe scrutiny at *Rome*. These would have been proper subjects for his inquiry: but I do not find, that he has so much as touched upon

upon them ; only in one case, *viz.* the miraculous cure of *Anne Charlier* wife of *Francis de la Fosse*, during the procession, on *Corpus Christi* day, at *Paris*, which was examined and published by *Cardinal de Noailles*, then archbishop of that city. As to this fact our author confesses, that he cannot see the least room for doubting that the cure really happened, but suspects that it might be natural, and owing to the transports of her devotion to the blessed Sacrament. And might he not, with equal reason, suspect the same of many cures which are related in the gospels, as miraculous ? When the woman, who had an issue of blood, was cured by touching the hem of our Saviour's garment, was not it a miracle ? And yet, may not a freethinker say, that this wonderful cure, as well as that of *Anne Charlier*, was natural, and effected by the transports of her devotion ? But of this more shall be said hereafter.

Besides this, he has offered some cavils, in which there is nothing material, against the miracles of *St. Ignatius* and *St. Francis Xavier*. As to all that he says of the pretended miracles of the *Abbé de Paris*, which makes up the chief part of his book, it no ways regards us ; they are detected to be forgeries by the pastors of our Church, and therefore we reject them, together with the impostures of the *French Prophets*.

But all our miracles, he says, ' are calculated to propagate the belief of certain rites and doctrines and practices which had crept into the Church, to advance the reputation of some particular chapel, or image, or order of religious &c. ' [1].

[1] *Criter.* 104.

As

As to this, our *Protestant Christian* ought to have proved, that the doctrines, of which he speaks, had crept into the Church, after the close of the gospel revelation. Because, that being a point in dispute between us, he must not expect, that we shall be so good-natured, to give up the question, at every turn, when he is pleased to beg it. The articles of our belief are of divine origin, as we prove from their being confirmed by miracles, which are tokens of a divine approbation. Nor is it any disparagement to such miracles, that they are calculated to propagate this belief: for, why did our Saviour work miracles, but to propagate his doctrines, and to promote the interests of Christianity? And if it please God, to honour any particular place with the working of a miracle, though the advancing of the reputation of that place is not the end of the miracle, yet, it is nothing but a natural consequence, that the reputation of the place will be advanced by it.

But he goes on and tells us, that miracles have been alledged by the *Dominicans* for the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, and others alledged by the *Franciscans* against the same tenet. He should have said quite the reverse: however, I shall pass over that mistake, as owing perhaps to the negligence of the printer; and only answer him, that, if he can produce to us miracles, examined and approved by the pastors of the Church, in favour of both sides of the question, then he will say something to the purpose. But if he only produces some pretended ones, which have been detected by the rulers of the Church, we shall make no difficulty to own, that, among Catholicks as well as Protestants, there have been men who have

have either been deceived themselves, in such matters, or have knowingly attempted to deceive others. But, when such things are discovered to proceed from a design of imposing a cheat on the world, they are so far from being approved or screened in our communion, that they are punished with just severity.

The only remaining objection which I shall speak to, is that which he draws from the old martyrologies, breviaries and legends, in which he tells us, there are 'instances of persons canonized who never lived : of heathens converted into christian Saints ; of hereticks mistaken for orthodox, and of moral and christian virtues personified into martyrs and miracle workers.' [1].

This is much more than he will, ever, be able to make out : but, as it is not to my present purpose, to enter into a particular discussion of these articles, I shall only give this general answer ; that, though the accounts, of some Saints lives, may be intirely lost ; yet, their having been venerated by the church, through time immemorial, is a stronger proof of their existence and orthodoxy, than all the surmises which he can alledge, are to the contrary. However, he must not imagine that we maintain our breviaries &c. to be free from all mistakes, either in point of orthography, or of history. They have been, and still may be amended : and if he can offer any new observations, which may contribute towards their further amendment, we shall be far from taking it ill of him.

Or, if his inclination carry him, to the reformatting of old Calendars ; I would, in the first place recommend to him a review of the Calendar

[1] Criter. 64.

and book of *Martyrs* published by *Fox*: a book esteemed, by many Protestants, next in authority to the holy scriptures, but stuffed with more impudent lies, than any legend that ever came within the compass of my reading. I shall mention but two or three instances. Besides some pretended *mariyrs*, who happened to be alive, long after the time that their martyrdom had been published to the world; he honoured, with that title, some who were hanged for robbery, and one who hanged himself in prison; a fact of which Sir *Thomas Moore* positively declared himself to be convinced, after having frequently and fully examined into it. There are also to be found, in the same book, pretended *prophets*, whom God did not send; men who claimed the gift of prophecy, many hundred years after the miraculous gifts are, by our author, supposed to have been withdrawn. He may find also, in the same catalogue, hereticks; if any such thing there be, as heresy: for there are men of all sorts of different persuasions. *Wicleffians*, *Hussites*, *Lutherans*, *Sacramentarians*; and what not? Dr. *Martin Luther* is honoured as a capital Saint, though he had solemnly declared the *Sacramentarians*, or *Zuinglians*, to be detestable hereticks, obfessed and possessed throughout with devils. Again, *Sacramentarians* have a place, in the same list of Saints, though they did not fail to return *Luther* his compliments, in the most bitter language; calling him a liar and a member of the devil. To reconcile the orthodoxy of these two parties, if it be possible; or, if that cannot be done, to reform this Calendar in any other manner, is what I would recommend, in the first place, to our Author as most worthy of his labours. For it grieves one to see a Christian

tian busied in urging those arguments against the miracles of the catholick Church, which, if they were of any force, would equally weaken the credibility of those which are recorded in the gospel. It is really, though, I believe, undesignedly, serving the cause of infidelity : for, to say nothing of the great numbers, who are ready to catch at every thing, which may tend to screen and encourage their freethinking principles ; there are many others, into whose minds their teachers have, by their misrepresentations, injected such an aversion against the catholick religion, that they greedily swallow down every thing which is said against it ; never suspecting, that under the cover of arguments against Popery, they receive arguments against Christianity ; which, though not perceived at first, may nevertheless be working destruction, like a slow poison, and at last subvert their belief in Christ.



P A R T II.

In which is given an abstract of the testimonies of the primitive Fathers, in favour of our assertion, that the miraculous powers subsisted, in the Church of God, down to the conversion of the Roman empire. MIDDLETON's exceptions, against their evidence, are severally considered, and proved to be insufficient and groundless.

§ I.

I COME now to a more particular examination of the testimonies, by which we are induced to believe, that the miraculous powers subsisted, in the christian Church, after the death of the Apostles. These testimonies are drawn from writings, which were penned in the most early ages, and are so clear and positive, as to leave no room to doubt the sentiments of those ages, concerning the continuance of miracles. The objections, which Doctor Middleton has made in favour of the opposite opinion, shall be mentioned in order as they come, with some remarks upon them; by which the reader may be enabled to judge, whether he has made out, in any tolerable manner, that heavy charge, of folly or wilful forgery, which he has brought against all the

the most learned and most holy men, who, from the beginning, have appeared in defence of Christianity.

To begin therefore with the apostolick Fathers, who had conversed with, and had been instructed by the Apostles and disciples of our Lord. The precious remains of their writings, which have come down to us, are, one treatise of St. *Hermas's*, intitled *the Shepherd*, and some few epistles written by St. *Barnabas*, St. *Clement*, St. *Ignatius* and St. *Polycarp*; to which may be added, the acts of the martyrdom of the two last mentioned Saints; which, on account of their venerable antiquity, deserve a particular regard.

But, previously, it may be observed, that if such a prodigious change had happened, in the Church, as must of necessity have been, if the miraculous gifts had entirely ceased, at the death of the Apostles; one might reasonably expect to find some mention made of it, by these holy men, in the instructions which they sent to divers Churches. Nevertheless, they do not give us the least intimation of any such change: they are wholly silent on that head; and their silence is a proof, that they were utter strangers to this pretended cessation. However, it is not from their silence that I shall argue, in this matter: there are other more convincing proofs, which shew, in the clearest manner, that the miraculous powers still subsisted in those times.

St. *Hermas*, who is suposed to be the person mentioned by St. *Paul*, in his ^{mas.} epistle to the Romans [1], relates, in his book

[1]. C. xvi. 14.

intitled *the Shepherd*, many heavenly visions and revelations with which he himself was favoured. In one of these visions, he saw a monstrous beast, which seemed to threaten destruction on every side, having strength sufficient to destroy the whole city of *Rome*, at one blow. After which, there appeared to him a *Virgin* richly adorned, whom, by former visions, he knew to be the *Church*. She commanded him to go, and forewarn the faithful, that the *beast* was a sign of an approaching persecution. Of this book, the Doctor does not make the least mention ; though he reckons *St Hermas* among the apostolick Fathers. From what motive this silence proceeds I cannot say ; but certainly not from any particular veneration which he had for the Saint : for, after having gone through near forty pages of his *inquiry*, he returns upon him with a charge of imposture, and accuses him of having forged the *Sibylline* books.

St. Bar- St. *Barnabas*, near the end of his
nabas. epistle c. 17, tells the faithful, that 'if
' he were to write to them, concerning things
' which are near at hand, and others which are
' at a greater distance, they would not understand,
' by reason of their being, for the most part,
covered under parables.' From these words we
may reasonably conclude that the Saint was fa-
voured with an insight into futurity ; perhaps in
the same manner as *Hermas* was. If he had been
wholly ignorant of things to come, he would, no
doubt, have declared his own ignorance of them ;
since there could not have been a more fit occa-
sion, than this, for such a confession. But, so
far is he from confessing any such ignorance, that,
on the contrary, he plainly intimates his own
know-

knowledge of them, though covered under certain mysterious parables.

St. Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostles, and second bishop of Antioch, after St. Ignatius.

Peter, having been condemned by the emperor Trajan, to be exposed to wild beasts at Rome, for his faith; and being on his road, from Antioch towards the place of his martyrdom, wrote some epistles; among the rest, one to the Romans from Smyrna; wherein he declares his ardent desire of suffering for Christ. ' I pray, says he, that the beasts may be ready prepared for me, I will even entice them to devour me speedily, and not, as it has happened to some, whom they have feared to touch. But if they are unwilling, I will even compel them ' [1]. The blessed man here expresses his apprehensions, lest the wild beasts should refuse to devour him, as had happened to some others. Would there have been any room, for such a doubt as this, if he had known that miracles were then ceased in the Church? The event was agreeable to his prayers and wishes, as we learn from the narrative of his martyrdom, which was written by eye witnesses. He was devoured by the beasts, ' so that there remained only the harder parts of his holy reliques, which were carried back to Antioch, and wrapped up in linnen, as an inestimable treasure left to the Church ' [2]. After which, the authors of this account relate, how they were assured, by several visions in their sleep, of the victory and glory of the blessed man; and that they intended to assemble together, on the day of his suffering, in order to communicate with the champion and generous martyr of Christ.

[1]. Ignat. epist. ad Rom.

[2]. Ruinart. act. sinc.

St. Po- St. Polycarp was ordained bishop of *Smyrna*, by St. John the Evangelist, and suffered death in that city for the name of Christ, in the reign of *Marcus Aurelius* and *Lucius Verus*. The narrative of his martyrdom was drawn up by eye witnesses in the name of the Church of *Smyrna*, from whom we learn the following particulars— The Saint having kept himself retired for some time, to escape the search of the persecutors, and being at prayer, three days before he was apprehended, he had a vision, wherein he saw his pillow on fire; whereupon turning himself to those that were with him, he said prophetically: *I must be burnt alive* [2]. Being apprehended soon after, and brought before the judge, a voice from heaven was heard, saying: *Be of good courage POLYCARP, and behave manfully*. After which, having courageously confessed his faith, he was condemned to be burnt alive. But when the wood was set on fire, the flame formed itself into an arch, round the martyr's body, without consuming it; and those who were present, smelt a prodigious fragrancy, like that of frankincense and precious spices. The Pagans, seeing that the flame did not consume him, ordered the executioner to stab him: which being done, there flew out a dove (b); and

[1]. Ruinart. N°. 5.

(b) This circumstance, of a dove flying out, is not mentioned by *Eusebius*, whose silence has given occasion to suspect, that it was not in the original acts, which were in his hands; but has since crept into them by some accident, perhaps through the negligence of transcribers writing one word instead of another. However I thought it necessary to mention it, in the account; chiefly, because the Doctor represents it as one of the juggling tricks of the primitive Christians; whereas there is not the least appearance of imposture in it.

such

such a quantity of blood issued forth, as extinguished the flames. The Saint being thus martyred, the Christians were very desirous of carrying off his holy reliques: but, to prevent it, Satan suggested to the persecutors, that they should not give the body to be buried; for which reason, it was cast into the fire and burnt. The Christians however found means 'to gather up his bones, more precious than the richest jewels, and tried above gold; and deposited them in a proper place, where they purposed to assemble themselves, as often as the Lord should give them opportunity, to celebrate the birth day of his martyrdom' [1].

Let the candid reader now judge, from these passages, whether the two Churches of *Antioch* and *Smyrna*, were *Catholick* or *Protestant*. Is not their great veneration for the reliques of the holy martyrs, as agreeable to the present practice of the catholick Church, as it is opposite to that of Protestants? And who can justly blame us, for adhering to the laudable practice of these Churches, which were governed by two so eminent disciples of the Apostles?

Besides these apostolical Saints, already mentioned; there were, about the same time, other learned and holy men, whose writings are now lost. As St. *Quadratus* bishop of *Athens*, whom *Eusebius* commends for his learning and orthodoxy, and says: 'at that time flourished also *Quadratus*, who is said to have been illustrious for the grace of prophecy, as were the daughters of *Philip*' [2]. He tells us, moreover, there were many, at that time, who left their own country, to go preach the gospel to barba-

[1]. *Ruin.* No. 18.

[2]. *Euseb.* I. 3. hist. c. 37.

rous

rous nations ; which they did with great success, being supported by the grace and power of God. ' For the power and strength of the divine Spirit, at that time, wrought many miracles by them' [1]. Thus speaks *Eusebius*, who had infinitely greater helps, to discover the transactions of those early ages, than any one can pretend to, at this time.

Middleton's objections. Let us now see what the Doctor has alledged in order to elude the force of these authorities. As to St. *Polyarp* and St. *Ignatius*, he brings them in, as disclaiming all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. The first, because he says, in his epistle to the *Philippians*, that ' he cannot come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned *Paul*....and, that it was not granted to him, to practise that which is written in the scriptures, *be angry and sin not*'. The other, because in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, he says : ' These things I prescribe to you, not as if I were somebody extraordinary, for, though I am bound for his name, I am not yet perfect in *Jesus Christ*'. By which passages the reader may discover, first, the great humility of the Saints, and secondly, the good assurance of the Doctor, in offering such wretched proofs, as these are, to convince us, that the miraculous powers were then withdrawn from the Church.

Moreover, with regard to St. *Polyarp*, he observes, that the foretelling of his death may, reasonably, be considered as the effect of common prudence, without recurring to any thing miraculous.

[1]. 1. 3. hist. c. 17.

Indeed

Indeed, as circumstances were then, the heathen magistrates being actually making search for him; it was *probable*, that a martyrdom was to be his lot. But he could not therefore *positively assure* his companions, that it was to be so: much less could he have known the *kind of death*, which was ordained for him, *viz.* that of being burnt, if it had not been signified to him from above. Besides, that very narrative, which was drawn up by eye-witnesses, represents the fact as miraculous, which is an incontestable proof that they at least, were utter strangers to that cessation of miracles which *Middleton* pretends to have discovered. And we hope, no one will take it ill of us, if we choose rather to believe them, than him; be his argument ever so necessary for the defence of the protestant cause.

But he has some other objections to make to this narrative, which he allows to be one of the most authentick and celebrated pieces, in all primitive antiquity. First, as to the voice pretended to come from heaven; he says it might have been uttered by some one in the crowd, and be mistaken for miraculous [1]. It is true, it might possibly have been so: but it was not thought to be so, by those who heard it, who were certainly more competent judges of what they heard themselves, than we can be, at this distance of time. This method of changing one thing into another by a *possibility* and a *perhaps*, artfully thrown into the account, is of great service to the free-thinkers, towards resolving many of the gospel miracles into natural events.

Then, the flame also is said to have made an arch around his body, without consuming it:

[1]. Inquiry p. 220.

‘ An

‘ An appearance, says he, which might easily happen from the common effects of the wind, or something at least so like it, as to afford matter enough to a superstitious fancy, to supply the rest’ [1]. Here, I think, his credulity has carried him beyond the bounds of natural possibility: He would have done well to have told us, what quarter of the wind it is, which will drive flames every way, so as to make an arch all round a body, and hinder it at the same time from exerting its own natural force of consuming. As to what he says, of the christian spectators being superstitious; we hope, it may be allowed us, to judge otherwise of them, and to believe that the great Saint *Polycarp*, the disciple of St. *John the Evangelist*, had instructed his flock so well, that there was no need of a *Middleton* to teach them their duty.

‘ But the circumstance, says he, of a dove flying out of his body, is beyond all belief: or if a dove was really seen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to consume him, it might have been conveyed thither, probably by design, in order to be let loose at a certain moment’ [2]. Here again, he has given us an instance of credulity not to be matched in old legends. A dove flies away, after having remained, a considerable time, in the midst of burning flames; and yet we must believe nothing that is miraculous. It is all owing, I presume, to that wonderful quality of the wind.

With regard to the death of this, and several other martyrs, whose sufferings were accompanied by many marks of a divine interposition,

[1]. *ibid.*

[2]. *ibid.*

he observes, in a marginal note, that, notwithstanding this *vain profusion of miracles*, as he calls it, their deaths were always effected at last [1]. But must we therefore call those miracles *vain*, because they did not prevent the martyrdom of the Saints? They were designed for other ends; for the comfort of the sufferers, for the encouragement of true believers, and for the conviction of the heathens. Was not our blessed Redeemer himself, the night before he suffered, comforted by an Angel from heaven? Did not he, by his word, strike down to the ground, those who came to seize him? Did not he, by his touch, heal the ear of *Malchus*, which St. Peter had cut off? And shall we call this a *vain profusion of miracles*, because it did not prevent his crucifixion? It is injurious to the wisdom of God to presume to call that *vain*, which he works for many good purposes, though it may not always be in our power to discern them.

§ 2. I shall now proceed, to give a short specimen of the sentiments of the primitive Fathers, concerning the actual exercise of miraculous powers in the Church, in their days.

St. *Justin martyr*, who from a pagan philosopher became a Christian, and was beheaded, for his religion, about the year of our Lord 167, in his 2d apology, for the Christians, to the *Roman Senate*, speaks thus: 'This you may understand, by what happens before your own eyes. For many persons possessed with devils, through the whole world, and in this very city, have been delivered, and are even now delivered, by several of our Christians

‘ adjuring them in the name of *Jesus Christ*’. And in his dialogue with *Tryphon the Jew*, he proves, that the gospel had succeeded in the place of the old law, by this argument; because, the gift of prophecy had ceased among the *Jews*, and was transferred to the *Christians*; among whom there were, then, both men and women, who had the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now, is it at all probable, that he would have exposed himself to the raillery of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by alledging these things, if there had been nothing but forgery in the case?

St. Irenæus. St. *Irenæus*, who was contemporary with St. *Justin*, but lived much longer, and was bishop of *Lyons*, where he suffered martyrdom, writing against the disciples of *Simon Magus*, and others, who pretended to work wonders, which were, in truth, nothing but magical delusions and transitory phantoms: ‘ for they cannot, he says, give sight to the blind, nor hearing to the deaf, nor cast out all devils, but only such as themselves have sent in.... But so far are they from raising the dead, as our Lord raised them, and as the Apostles did by prayer, and as in the brotherhood, *that is, the catholick Church*, oftentimes, on some necessary occasion, when the whole Church of the place hath begged it, with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead person hath returned, and the man hath been given back to the prayers of the Saints, *so far are they from doing this, that they do not even allow it to be possible*’ [2]. And in the chapter following, he goes on. ‘ Among them who are truly disciples of *Jesus*...

‘ some cast out devils, effectually and truly ; so that they, who have been cleansed from the wicked spirits, often turn believers, and become members of the Church : others have the knowledge of future events, visions, and prophetick sayings : others heal the sick by the imposition of hands : and moreover the dead have been raised, and have continued with us many years’ [1]. And in another place: ‘ We hear, says he, many brethren, in the Church, endued with prophetick gifts, and speaking, by the Holy Ghost, with all kinds of tongues’ [2].

St. *Theophilus*, who, about the year of St. *Christ* 168, was chosen bishop of *Antioch*, in his books to *Autolycus* against the flanderers of the christian religion, speaking of the evil spirits which used to inspire the poets and prophets of the heathen world, says: ‘ The truth of this is manifestly shewn ; because those who are possessed by such spirits, are sometimes exorcized, even at this day, in the name of the true God ; and those same seducing spirits confess themselves to be the *demons*, who before had inspired the heathen poets’ [3].

Tertullian, who flourished at the end of the second, and beginning of the third century, challenges the heathen magistrates to call before their tribunals, any person manifestly possessed with a devil ; and if the evil spirit, when exorcized by any Christian whatsoever, did not own himself to be a devil, as truly, as in other places he would falsely call himself a god. . . . not daring to tell a lie to a Christian ; that then they should take the life of that Chris-

[1] c. 32.

[2] l. 5. c. 6.

[3] l. 2.

tian.

‘ tian. And what is more manifest, adds he, than this work? what more convincing than this ‘ proof?’ [1].

Minucius Felix. *Minucius Felix* a Roman Lawyer, about the same time, addressing himself to his heathen friend, in his dialogue called *Octavius*, says: ‘ The greatest part of you know, what confessions the *demons* make, concerning themselves, as oft as they are expelled by us, out of the bodies of men. . . . They confess what they are. Nor, in this, do they tell us a lie, though it be to their own shame, especially, when some of your people are present. . . . For being adjured by the true and only God, they unwillingly and wretchedly betray their own uneasiness, in the bodies of men, and either fly out instantly, or vanish gradually, in proportion as the faith of the *patient*, or the grace of the *agent* assists towards the cure’.

Acts of St. Perpetua &c. About the beginning of the third century, two holy women, *Perpetua* and

Felicitas, suffered martyrdom in *Africa*, during the persecution which was raised against the Christians, by *Severus*. The genuin account of their sufferings is still extant, in which St. *Perpetua* relates a vision which she had, concerning the state of her brother *Dinocrates*, who died of a cancer in his face, when he was but seven years old. Her words are: ‘ While we were all at prayer together, on a sudden, and to my great surprize, I mentioned the name of *Dinocrates*, which had not come into my mind, till that moment; and I was grieved at the remembrance of his misfortune. Immediately,

[1] *Apol.* c. 23.

‘ I knew

I knew that I was worthy, and that I ought to pray for him: and I began to offer up prayers and sighs for him, to the Lord. That very night, I had a vision: I saw *Dinocrates* coming forth from a dark place, in which there were many others, greatly tormented by heat and thirst, with a sordid and pale countenance, and the wound in his face, which he had when he died..... When I was awake, I understood that my brother was in a state of suffering; but I trusted, that my prayers could obtain relief for him; and I prayed day and night, with many sighs and tears, that he might be pardoned for my sake..... And I had another vision. I saw that the place which before had appeared dark, was now bright; and that *Dinocrates* was clean, and well clad, and refreshed, and had only a scar in his face, where the wound had been. Then I understood that his punishment was remitted? [1].

St. *Austin* observes, that *Dinocrates* might have been guilty of telling lies, or might have been drawn, by his father, who was a heathen, into some act of idolatry; for which faults, though not so great in him, as in persons of a more advanced age, he might be doomed to a place of torments, till his pardon was obtained, by the prayers of his sister, who was then going to lay down her life for Christ.

These genuin monuments of antiquity afford evident proofs, that the catholick doctrine of purgatory and *prayers for the dead* is the primitive doctrine of the Church of God. And *Middleton* is highly displeased, that some of his brethren

[1] *Ruinart.* act. Mar.

have expressed a veneration for these ancient acts, which abound with so much popery, as should be sufficient, he thinks, to check their protestant zeal.

But he has something more to say against them, which is: that the original collector and publisher of them was a *Montanist*, and that St. *Perpetua* also herself was, probably, tainted with the same heresy [1].

Who the person was that collected these acts, or what were his religious sentiments, is not certainly known. He was cotemporary with the holy martyrs, and appeals to those who were present at their sufferings, for the truth of what he relates. But it is rash presumption, to accuse a Saint of heresy, to whom the Church has paid a constant veneration for so many ages; especially, when no other reason is alledged, to support so grievous a charge, but this of her having related the heavenly visions, with which she was favoured. Nor is it reasonable to suspect the truth of these visions, on account of their having been mentioned by the *Montanists*, in order to recommend their own pretended revelations. Every day we hear *Arians* and *Socinians*, *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, *Anabaptists* and *Independents*, quoting the sacred scriptures, each in favour of their own opinions: but we do not therefore think the worse of the word of God, nor imagine that it really favours all the jarring sects, who are incessantly appealing to it, in confirmation of their own whims.

St. Narcissus. About the same time St. *Narcissus*, bishop of *Jerusalem*, was illustrious for

[1] Inquiry p. 206.

the grace of miracles ; the remembrance of which, *Eusebius* informs us, was preserved among the faithful down to his time. One in particular he mentions, which happened on the great vigil of *Easter*, when, there being no oil left, for the use of the Church, the holy bishop, commanded that some water, over which he had prayed, should be poured into the lamps, with a sincere faith in Christ ; and it was, by a miraculous and divine power, changed into oil. [1].

The same historian gives us an extract out of an anonymous writer against the heresy of *Theodotus* and *Artemon*, who affirmed that our Saviour was not God and man, but man only : in which that ancient writer says : ‘ There was not long ago, a certain man called *Natalis*, who had confessed the name Christ. But he was led into an error by *Asclepiodotus* and one *Theodotus*, both of them followers of that *Theodotus* who was first excommunicated by *Victor* bishop of *Rome*, on account of this mad doctrine. These two persuaded *Natalis* to be made bishop of those hereticks, for the sake of a pension.....After he was gone over to their party, he was often admonished, by our Lord, in his sleep. For our most merciful God and Lord, *Jesus Christ*, was unwilling that he, who had suffered for his name, should perish, *being out of the Church*. But the honour of being chief bishop of that sect, and the Fordid desire of gain prevailed with him, above those visions. At last, he was severely scourged the whole night long, by blessed Angels : whereupon, rising early next morning, he put on sackcloth, and sprinkled

[1] *Euseb.* l. 6, hist. c. 9.

himself with ashes, and threw himself, with many tears, at the feet of *Zephyrin* the bishop of *Rome*, by whom he was, after many intreaties, admitted again to the communion of the Church [1].

Origen. In the third century, the learned *Origen*, in his books against *Celsus*, declares, ‘that there remained, among the Christians of those days, the manifest indications of that Holy Spirit which was seen in the shape of a dove. For they drive away devils, perform many cures, foresee things to come, according to the will of the Divine Word....I have seen many examples of this sort, and should I only set down such of them as were transacted in my presence, I should expose myself to the loud laughter of the unbelievers, who imagine that we, like the rest, whom they suspect of forging such things, are imposing our forgeries also upon them: but God is my witness, that my sole purpose is to recommend the religion of *Jesus*, not by fictitious tales, but by clear and evident facts’ [2].

Who can desire a more ample testimony than is here given? A man of admirable parts and learning speaks of his own knowledge, of things done before his own eyes, and calls God to witness for the truth of what he says. But little did he imagine that the time would come, when Christians would join in the loud laughter, and accuse him of imposing a forgery upon them.

St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. Near the middle of the same century, *St. Gregory*, one of *Origen*’s scholars, was made bishop of *Neocæsarea*,

[1] Euseb. l. 5. c. 28. [2] Orig. l. 1. cont. Cels.

where

where, by the many great miracles which he wrought, such numbers were converted to the faith of Christ, that, whereas, at his first entrance into the bishoprick, there were no more than seventeen Christians in that city, there remained no more than seventeen infidels at his death. St. *Basil* [1] says, that, on account of the excellence of his miraculous gifts, he was called a second *Moses* even by the enemies of the truth. And he has, ever since, been honour'd with the distinctive name of *Thaumaturgus* or *worker of miracles*. *Middleton*, with his admirers, may laugh if they please, at some facts which are related of this holy man. But, without entering into a particular discussion of each, we shall only say, that *God is wonderful in his Saints*. And indeed it is wholly incredible that the world could ever have entertained such an opinion of this Saint's miracles, as to distinguish him from others, by the name of *Thaumaturgus*, if there had been no real grounds for it.

St. *Cyprian*, bishop of *Carthage*, who suffered martyrdom an. 258, in his book *of the vanity of Idols*, mentions the power which Christians had, in his time, of casting out devils, by adjuring them in the name of the true God. And in his book against *Demetrianus* a Pagan; he calls upon him to come and see with his own eyes, that these things are true. And in his letter to *Cæcilius*, speaking of certain persons who were fallen from the ancient practise and true tradition of the Church, by not mixing wine and water in the chalice, when they offered the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ,

St. Cy-
prian.[1] *I. de Spir.* So. c. 29.

he says, he was commanded by Almighty God to bring them back to the true tradition, which was founded on the practice of our Saviour himself, *viz.* that in the chalice, which is offered, there should be both wine and water.

And in his treatise concerning the lapsed Christians, who, in the time of persecution, had been induced, through fear of death or torments, to deny Christ; he relates, how the judgments of God fell visibly on several persons, who had presumed to receive the blessed sacrament unworthily. One instance is, of a woman who had fallen, during the persecution, and nevertheless, before she had expiated her crime by penance, came unobserved to receive the communion when he himself was offering the sacrifice, *sacrificantibus nobis*. But, she was instantly seized with pains and torments, as if the *blood* had been to her a deadly poison: and her crime which had escaped the notice of men, met with it's punishment from God. Another instance is, of a woman, who, having attempted, with polluted hands, to open the box in which was kept the *Holy of the Lord*, that is, the blessed sacrament, was deterred from touching it, by a fire which burst out from it. And a man, who had also been defiled, having presumed to take a particle, among the rest, undiscovered, after the priest had celebrated the sacrifice, he was not suffered to receive it, for, on opening his hand, he found nothing but ashes.

Here it may be observed, 1st. that, in those primitive times, the christian Church had a *sacrifice*. 2dly. that the cup was offered with wine and water mingled together, conformably to the practice of Christ, at his last supper. 3dly. that the

sacrament was kept, to be received at other times, when the sacrifice was not offered. In all which articles, the protestant system bears no resemblance to those purest ages of the Church of Christ.

St. *Dionysius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, one of the most illustrious prelates of that ^{ius} age, who was consulted on difficult questions from all parts of the world, declares, and calls God to witness for the truth of it, that in the time of persecution, he was commanded, by our Lord, in a vision, to retire from *Alexandria*, and was wonderfully preserved by him, in his retreat [1]. He relates also, that having had some scruples about reading heretical books, a voice from heaven expressly enjoined him, to read them all without reserve, because he was able to confute them [2]. Now, if this holy man made a scruple of reading heretical books, I think we may reasonably infer, that his conscience was too tender to suffer him to swear to a falsehood: for, perjury is certainly the greater crime of the two.

Among the genuin acts of the martyrs, *Nilus* set forth by *Ruinart*, there is an account of the martyrdom of St. *Theodotus* and seven virgins, who suffered an. 303, written by *Nilus* an eye witness, who tells us, that *Theodotus* had the gift of miracles, that he cured inveterate diseases by prayer, and by imposition of hands: and as to himself, he declares, that he does not doubt but he shall be assisted, in the prosecution of this narrative, by the holy martyr's intercession in heaven. The occasion of his being brought

[1] *Euseb. hist. 1. 6. c. 40.*

[2] *Euseb. 1. 7. c. 7.*

to martyrdom, was his having ventured to draw out of a certain lake, the bodies of seven Virgins, who had been cast into it, for their faith. In the doing of which, he was encouraged and assisted by several heavenly visions, which are related at large in this narrative.

Laetantius the Orator, surnamed the Christian Cicero, illustrious for his learning, and disinterested spirit, in his books of divine *Institutions*, declares, that the devils, being adjured in the name of God, retired out of the bodies of men, and did not only confess themselves to be demons, but even declared their own names. ‘ the same, says he, which are adored in the temples : and this they do often-times in the presence of their own worshippers’ [1]. And speaking of the virtue of *the sign of the cross*, he says : ‘ How terrible this sign is to the demons, is well known to them who have seen how they fly away out of the bodies which they have possessed, when they are adjured in the name of Christ. For as he, while he conversed among men, put all the devils to flight with his word so now his followers eject those same evil spirits, out of men, both in the name of their Lord, and with the sign of his passion’ [2]. In the same place, he assures, that the pagan gods had been oft put to flight, and the sacrifices rendered ineffectual, when some Christian, who by chance was present, had made the sign of the cross on his forehead. Which same thing was the first occasion of the persecution, which *Diocletian* raised against the Church, as he relates in his

[1] l. 2. c. 15.

[2] c. 27.

book of the deaths of the persecutors [1]. By this it appears, not only that it was customary, with the christians of those times, as it had been with those who were gone before, to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads ; but also, that this sign is a powerful weapon against the devils. And therefore it is a shame, that the use of it should be so very displeasing, as it is, to many who call themselves disciples of a crucified Saviour, and have, in their baptism, renounced the devil and all his works.

It were needless to alledge any more testimonies : these which I have already offered to the reader, are more than sufficient to prove, that the primitive writers, down to the conversion of the Roman empire, were fully convinced, by the evidence of plain facts, that the miraculous powers still subsisted in the Church of God, in their days.

The same writers inform us, and it is worthy to be noticed, as an argument for the indisputable reality of the facts, that the *Pagans*, when such miraculous works were urged against them, frequently ascribed them either to magick, or to the aversion which their gods had against the name of *Jesus*. Sometimes indeed they ascribed them to forgery, but never were able to prove the charge. Whereas, if there had really been any fraud put in practice, it could not have escaped a detection, on several accounts. 1st. Because it must have been so often repeated, during the course of so many years ; a circumstance which must needs have given the enemies of Christianity all the opportunities they could desire, of making

discoveries. 2dly Because many of the heathens had as large a share of cunning as Dr. Middleton, and as good a will to have detected the cheat. 3dly Because, if Christianity had been carried on and supported by the prevalence of these juggling tricks, such numbers must have been let into the secret, as would have produced a discovery. As there was a *Judas* among the Apostles, so among the primitive Christians, there were leading men, who fell from their faith: of whom it is natural to think, that some of them, at least, would have laid open the whole mystery of iniquity, for their own justification. But, seeing that nothing of this sort ever happened; we may conclude with words of *Athenagoras*, a Christian Philosopher of the second century, in his apology against the the calumnies of the heathens: ' If one ask them, ' says he, whether they have seen what they al- ' ledge against us; there is not one of them so ' impudent as to pretend it. Besides, we have ' servants, some of us have many, from whom it ' is impossible to conceal our practices. But not ' one, even of these, ever told such a lie against ' us.' So may we say: None of the heathens ever detected this fraud; none of the Christians ever confessed it; nor did any of those who, after having been admitted into all their secrets, revolted from them and became their declared enemies, ever make such a discovery. A convincing proof that there was no imposture to be discovered.

Middle-
ton's ob-
jections.

§ 3. It is time now, that we should see what the Doctor has to say, against the testimony of so many venerable men. His arguments are gathered from several different articles, which I purpose to

to follow, in the same order, in which he has drawn them out. But previous to them he observes, that we never find the Apostles calling upon the magistrates and people, to come and see the mighty wonders, which they were ready to exhibit before their eyes. Whereas, the primitive Christians challenge all the world, to come and see with what superiour power they could drive the devils out of the bodies of men: which 'confident and ostentatious manner, says he, of proclaiming their extraordinary powers, carries with it an air of quackery and imposture.' [1].

Challen-
ges made
by Chris-
tians.

This, indeed, is an artful method of dealing with a troublesome objection. Had the primitive Christians endeavoured to conceal their pretensions from the heathens, then would the Doctor have exulted, telling us, with an air of triumph, that their secrecy betrayed a consciousness of their guilt, and that their not daring to expose such miracles to a publick trial, was a tacit confession of their forgery. But, now that they call upon the heathens to come and see with their own eyes, and even stake their lives too upon the issue of the trial, it must pass for quackery and imposture. Whereas, it is, in truth, a most invincible argument for the contrary. Cheats and jugglers shun the light, because they are afraid of being detected: but when persons desire nothing more than to be brought to the light, and even challenge their mortal enemies to examine their cause, it is an evident sign that they are sincere, and firmly persuaded of the truth of what they say.

[1] Inq. p. 21.

Whether the Apostles ever made such an appeal as this, or not, is more than we can tell; for, all their actions are not recorded in writing. But we find, in the old testament, such a challenge made by a great prophet and worker of miracles. *And Elias coming to all the people said: How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him: But if Baal: then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word. And Elias said again to the people: I only remain a prophet of the Lord: but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. Let two bullocks be given us, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it upon wood, but put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under it. Call ye on the names of your gods, and I will call on the name of my Lord: and the God that shall answer by fire, let him be God.* And all the people answering said: *A very good proposal.* Middleton's admirers perhaps will answer and say, that this too carries with it an air of quackery and imposition.

Quality of the persons who wrought miracles. After this, he begins to support his charge by observations on the qualities of the persons who were indued with these extraordinary gifts. The remarks, which he has made under this article, may be reduced to the following heads.

First, in the new testament we find, that ' the power of working miracles was committed to none but the Apostles, and to a few of the most eminent of the other disciples, who were particularly commissioned to propagate the gospel, and preside in the Church of Christ ' [1]. Se-

[1] Inq. p. 24.

condly

condly, none of those primitive bishops and martyrs ‘ have any where affirmed, that either they themselves, or the Apostolick Fathers before them, were indued with any power of working miracles, but declare only, in general, that such powers were actually subsisting in their days, and openly exerted in the Church; that they had often seen the wonderful effects of them But, as to the persons who wrought them, they leave us strangely in the dark; for instead of specifying their names, conditions or characters; their general stile is: Such and such works are done among us, or by us, or by our people . . . by our Exorcists, by ignorant laymen, women, boys, and any simple Christian whatsoever.’ [1]. Thirdly, ‘ but of what condition soever the actors were, it is certain that in the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and imposture by their adversaries’ [2], by *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Cæcilius*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*. Fourthly, the profusion of miracles, on the bones and reliques of the Saints and martyrs, ‘ suggests a farther cause of suspecting the faith and judgment of those early ages If we can believe such stories, as they are delivered to us by the primitive writers, we cannot condemn a practice, which is evidently grounded upon them:’ meaning, the practice of Catholics in their veneration of reliques.

These four articles are the substance of what he has collected, in order to prove his assertion, from the qualities of the instruments, which God made use of, for the working of miracles.

[1] *Inq.* p. 22.[2] *ibid.*

His first remark cannot be true, unless the new testament be false. For in the acts of the Apostles, it is related that the Holy Ghost fell on *Cornelius*, and many others who were assembled at his house, even before they were baptized, and they spoke with tongues [1]. There is mention made also of four daughters of *Philip*, who had the gift of prophecy; though we may presume, they did not preside in the Church [2]. And from the fact of *Simon Magus*, when he offered money to purchase the power of giving the Holy Ghost, we may gather, that some or other of these wonderful gifts were, generally, bestowed on such as were confirmed by the Apostles. And St. *Paul*, in his epistle to the *Corinthians*, speaks of these graces, as very common among the faithful of that city [3].

As to his second remark: It is true, the holy Fathers do not often mention the extraordinary favours which they themselves had received for which we ought rather to admire their humility, than to blame their silence. St. *Paul* himself, even on a necessary occasion, did not mention such favours without reluctance. *If I must glory*, says he (*it is not expedient indeed*) *but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord*. *I know a man in Christ . . . caught up to the third heaven . . . of such a one I will glory: but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities* [4]. But, suppose that they had more frequently mentioned the graces which they received, what would have been the consequence? Would our cavilling Doctor have been satisfied with it? Far from it. He accuses St. *Justin* of madness, and St. *Cyprian*

[1] Act. cx.

[2] cxxi.

[3] c. xii. and xiv.

[4] i. Cor. xii. 2.

of pride and ambition, for this very reason, because they mention the favours which they had received from Heaven. So, if they mention their own gifts, he calls them either proud or mad : if they are silent about their own, he will believe nothing that they say of the gifts of others. To be short, what likelihood is there that he would give credit to their evidence, when speaking of themselves ; if he will not believe them, when they speak of what was done by others, before their eyes.

But they ascribe, says he, these wonderful works to laymen, to women and boys. They do so, and thereby prove, that the power of Christ is infinitely superior to that of the devils, who had so long deceived the heathen world. ‘ Simple Christians, says *Origen* l. 7. against *Celsus*, drive out the devils by their words, accompanied with the grace of Christ ; which demonstrates the weakness of the *demons* ; seeing that, to cast them out of the bodies and souls of men, there is no need of wisdom and learning.’ As to the Exorcists, they were particularly called to that office by the Church, though their rank was among the inferior Clergy ; it being unreasonable that the pastors should be taken off from the greater duties of preaching, of offering the holy sacrifice, and of administering the sacraments, in order to attend to the exorcisms. Nevertheless, it sometimes happened, that the office of exorcizing the *demoniacks* was supplied by some one of the superior Clergy. So, *Eusebius* relates that the holy martyr *Romanus* was Deacon and Exorcist of the Church of *Cæsarea* [1].

[1] *De Mart. Palæs.* c. 2.

Now when a writer, of unquestionable judgment and veracity, relates, of his own knowledge, that devils were cast out, by the Exorcists of the Church; must his testimony be therefore rejected, because he does not specify the names, conditions or characters of those Exorcists, nor of the persons out of whom the devils were cast? Surely that cannot be. An obscure writer, whose sincerity is not known, may, I confess, sooner gain credit to what he relates, by entering into a particular detail of the names and characters of parties concerned, than he would, if his narrative were divested of all those circumstances: but a person of strict veracity may be depended on, in a short account of a fact, as much as in one that is more circumstantial. His veracity is what we rely on, which is equally the same, whether he be concise or diffusive in the account which he gives. This is properly called *human faith*, when we believe a man *on his own word and authority*. For instance, if a person of well known sincerity, were to assure me, that he had been an eye-witness to some extraordinary cure performed by a physician; I should believe him on his word, though he did not tell me the name of the physician, nor of the person so cured: because, the attestation of a person, of known capacity and probity, deserves credit; or else there is no such thing as faith in man. It is very unreasonable, therefore, in the Doctor, to require that we should refer him to the particular instances and names of the persons, on whom miracles were wrought. What need is there of it? It is sufficient that we are assured, by unquestionable human authority, that they were actually wrought, though the particular circumstances

stances attending them have not, in many cases, been delivered down to us.

However, this is not so much to be wondered at in *Middleton*, being no more than what he was bound to say, in consequence of that shameful and false principle, which he had laid down, that all the primitive Fathers were either fools or knaves. But one of his seconds has made a bolder push, and standing upon the high ground which his master had prepared for him, has carried the discovery still farther, asserting the very same of the Apostles themselves. ‘Had the writers of the ‘new testament, says he, only attested, in general, ‘such and such miracles to have been wrought, ‘without specifying any particular circumstances, ‘either the occasion of their being wrought, or ‘the persons by whom they were wrought, or ‘those persons on whom they were wrought, ‘they had not deserved the least credit’ [1]. By this, the Apostles are brought to a level with the primitive Fathers; and not one of them all is judged worthy to be believed, *on his own authority*. Nothing better could be expected from such principles.

His third remark is supported by the authority of *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Cæcilius*, *Porphyry* and *Julian the Apostate*, whose outrageous invectives, against the Christian religion, he quotes, both here and in other parts of his work, with an apparent relish and satisfaction. These bear witness, that the primitive Christians were jugglers, *a lurking nation, shunning the light, mute in publick, prating in corners*. To which it will be sufficient to answer, that their invectives were levelled chiefly at Christ and his

[1] Letter to Mr. Jackson.

Apostles, by which they have made themselves infamous to all ages, for their misrepresentations and hatred of Christianity. However, as far as they can be of service to the Doctor, in fixing the protestant religion on its proper basis, we shall not envy him their assistance. But it is somewhat strange that he should, in this place, urge it against the primitive Christians, that they were *a lurking nation, shunning the light, mute in publick*; whereas, but two pages before, he had charged them with quackery and imposture; on account of their having made publick challenges to the heathens, to come and examine the merits of their pretensions.

The fourth remark is all begging of the question. The point in dispute between Catholicks and Protestants is, whether the Church does well, in testifying a veneration for the reliques of the Saints and martyrs. We affirm that the practice is lawful and commendable, and among other arguments, alledge the many evident miracles, which have been wrought at their tombs, as a most convincing proof, that it is pleasing and acceptable to God. But the Doctor, in order to disprove these miracles, takes it for granted, that the practice is superstitious; whereas that is the very point in question and is denied, not only by far the greatest part of the christian world at present, but also by all the bishops of the primitive Church.

Character
of the wit-
nesses.

§. 4. In the next place, he proceeds to inquire into the particular characters of the Fathers, on whose testimony we rely in the present dispute, about the reality of the miracles which they relate. Under this

this head, it must be observed, first, that miracles are events which, for the most part, fall under the senses, as the raising of the dead, the giving of sight to the blind, healing the sick and lame &c. which wonderful works are striking and sensible proofs of a divine assistance: and every person, of tolerable judgment, without any extraordinary share of cunning, may be a competent judge of such a proof. Certain it is, that miracles were not intended for the conviction of the wise and learned only, but also, and perhaps principally, for the lower class of mankind; and therefore the ignorant, as well as the learned, must be deemed competent judges of such an argument; or else we must say, that Christ sent his Apostles, to convert all nations by arguments, of which but few or scarce any were capable of framing a right judgment: which to say, were a reproach to the wisdom of God.

Secondly, it may be observed, that there is one circumstance, which must, of necessity, add great weight to the testimony of the primitive Fathers, in this debate: which is, that the place, which many of them held, of bishops and pastors in the Church, gave them both opportunity and occasion, to search into the truth of the matters which they attest. It was their duty to see, that their flock was not imposed upon, by any cheats: they understood the great charge which was given them, in these words of St. Paul: *Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock; wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God* [1]. They knew that they were to render a

1st previous observation.

2d previous observation.

[1] *Ad. xx. 28.*

strict account of the souls committed to their care: and therefore, when they bear witness to miracles, in which they were bound, by the place they held, to prevent all fraud, their testimony ought to have the greatest weight.

3d previous observation. Another thing which I would observe, is, that it would betray a great want, either of judgment or sincerity,

in an author; if, in drawing out the character of any person, conspicuous for many shining qualities and endowments, he were to suppress these, and mention nothing but some few mistakes which that person had made in difficult speculative questions. A contrivance which the Doctor has found to be of great service; as it hath enabled him to give us such a character of the primitive Fathers as will best suit his own plan. But let us see what it is that he has said against them.

St. Justin. To begin with *St. Justin martyr*: he thinks he has abundant proofs, to ruin the credit of this Saint for ever, which he handles after a manner very unbecoming a Christian. The first proof is taken from his method of expounding the scriptures, by allegories and allusions: as when *Moses*'s rod, and the wood with which he made the waters sweet, and the posture he stood in, when *Amalec* was defeated, are all alledged by him, as bearing some allusion to the *cross of Christ*. But Dr. *Middleton* takes this to be wretched stuff, ' the pure flights of an enthusiastic fancy and heated brain, which no man in his sober senses could mistake for divine revelations. Yet, as absurd as they now appear to be, this pious Father insists, that they were all suggested to him from heaven'.

The

The Doctor should have reflected, that, by declaring this method, of expounding by allegory, to be an indication of an *enthusiaſtick fancy* and *heated brain*, he really casts a bitter reproach on St Paul himself, after whose example St. Justin copied. *It is written*, says this Apostle, *that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, and the other by a free woman. which things are said by an allegory. For these are the two testaments. The one from mount Sina, engendring to bondage, which is Agar.* [1]. And in another place. *I would not, says he, have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all in Moses were baptized in the cloud, and in the sea: and did all eat the same spiritual food: and all drank the same spiritual drink (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ)* [2]. Thus the Apostle. And surely it cannot be deemed either a crime or a symptom of madness, in St. Justin, to have copied after such a master.

But it is an imposition on the holy martyr, to accuse him of setting off his allegorical allusions for *divine revelations*. Every good thought is suggested from heaven, but it is not therefore to be called a *divine revelation*. Nor was it without reason, that the Saint, in his dialogue with the *Jews*, ascribed his understanding of the scriptures, to the grace of God. First, because he had received the *grace of faith*, by which every believer is enabled to understand the sacred writings, much better than they can be understood by an unbelieving *Jew*. By the help of faith, a believer discovers such an agreement between the old and

[1] Galat. iv. 22.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 1.

new testament, as there ought to be between the *type* and the *reality*: for instance, he sees how the cloud, which covered the children of Israel, and the sea through which they passed, were *types or figures* of the water of baptism, through which Christians pass, to come to the liberty of children of God: which fulfilling of the old law is what an unbelieving Jew doth not discern. Secondly, because the *particular facility*, which he had, of drawing pious reflections from passages of holy writ, is a gift of God, though not a miraculous one; and therefore in all reason and justice, ought to be ascribed to him from whom it was derived.

After this, he proceeds to reproach the Saint first with the *Millenarian* error: secondly with his mistaken notion of the nature of Angels: and thirdly, with his regard for the *Sibylline* books.

The *Millennium*. As to the *Millennium*; it is true, St. *Justin* was so far mistaken, as to think that the Saints should be raised in the flesh, and reign with Christ in the new *Jerusalem*, for a thousand years, before the general resurrection. But the Doctor has acted a very unfair part, in pretending to give us the *Martyr's* sentiments in his own words, whereas he has misrepresented them in two material articles. He says; St. *Justin* declares that *all the Christians*, *who were in all points orthodox*, embraced and believed the doctrine of the *Millennium*: that *all the Saints* should be raised in the flesh, and reign with Christ in *Jerusalem*, enlarged and beautified in a wonderful manner for their reception, *in the enjoyment of all sensual pleasures*, for a thousand years. These are marked as St. *Justin's* words Dial. part 2. p. 313. and as much of the greek as was convenient is quoted in

in the margin, one part of the sentence, which would have discovered the cheat, being entirely omitted. The Saint's words are these. ' But I and all Christians who are orthodox in all points, know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and the prophets *Ezechiel*, *Isaias* and others acknowledge a *Millennium* in *Jerusalem*, when it shall be rebuilt and adorned and enlarged' (e). He doth not mention *sensual pleasures*, which was the most blameable part of that error; nor doth he say, that all orthodox Christians embraced the doctrine of the *Millennium*, in any sense; but only, that they all believed a resurrection of the flesh. For as to the *Millenarian* system, though he himself thought it was foretold by the prophets, yet he does not say that all Christians were of the same sentiment. On the contrary, but a little before the passage in question, he confesses that ' many who were pure and godly Christians did not come into that opinion' (f).

Concerning the nature of Angels, it is no great wonder that St. *Justin*, and some other ancient writers, were mistaken; considering the great obscurity of the

(e) Εγω δὲ καὶ εἴ τινες εἰστε ὄρθονόμονες καὶ τάπια χειρίσαντο, καὶ σαρπὸς ἀνάστατο γενήσασθαι ἐπιτάραχτα, καὶ χίλια ἑτη ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ οἰκεδουνθεῖσῃ καὶ κοσμοθεῖσῃ καὶ ταλαιπωθεῖσῃ, οἱ προφῆται Ἰερεχίηλ, καὶ Ησαίας, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ὄμολογοι. S. Just. dial. cum Tryph. p. p. 307. Edit. Colon. an. 1686.

(f) St. Just. dial. cum Tryphone p. 306. speaking of this Millennium, says: ' I have already confessed to you, O Trypho, that I, and many others of the same mind with me, do think that it will come to pass. But I have also signified to you, that many, who are of pure and pious christian sentiments, do not think so'. πολλοὶ δ' αὖτε καὶ τῶν τῆς καθαρῆς καὶ ἐνσεβῆς ὑπερηφανῶν γνῶμεν, τέτοιο μη γνωρίζειν ἐσημανάσσονται.

question, which had then been but little discussed. The opinion which they embraced, of their intercourse with women, arose from the misunderstanding of those words of the book of *Genesis*: *The sons of God, seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair, took to themselves wives, &c.* which passage they interpreted of the *Angels of God*: and probably, this misinterpretation might take its rise, or be confirmed at least, from some copies of the *Septuagint* version which had it thus: *The angels of God seeing the daughters of men, &c.*

However, I believe it will appear, to every man of sense, but a lame way of arguing, to urge this and the foregoing mistake, as proofs that the holy martyr was of so weak an understanding, as not to be capable of judging of plain facts, which happened before his own eyes. If every one, who is liable to a speculative error, in any obscure question, must be, on that account, excluded from being a competent judge of miracles, even when they are wrought in his presence: it will follow, that no one can judge of them, so as to be depended on, unless he be infallible. Which would destroy the very use and end of all miracles whatever, even of those which were wrought by Christ and his Apostles. For they were wrought for the conviction of fallible men, of men as liable to mistakes as St. *Justin* was, and therefore as incapable of being competent judges of them, as he was. Nor can I conceive how the Doctor, or any one else, can maintain, that the converts, made by the Apostles, were fit judges of their miracles; unless he will allow the same privilege

to

to St. *Justin*, who was certainly, for learning and capacity, far superior to many of them.

The Sibyl-line books. ‘ But he professes, says the Doctor, the highest regard for certain spurious books, which were published under the names of the *Sibyl* and *Hystaspis* and it is certain, that, from this example and authority of *Justin*, these silly writings were held in the highest veneration, by the Fathers and rulers of the Church, through all succeeding ages The heathens, on the other hand, charged the Christians with the forgery of these books, and gave the title of *Sibyllists* by way of contempt, to those who held them to be divine *Orig. I. 5. contra Celsum.* Which charge the Fathers constantly denied, and treated as a pure calumny. Yet all the critics of these days allow the fact to be true; and consider it as one of the pious frauds of those primitive ages Some impute the fraud to *Hermas*, some to *Papias*, and others to *Justin* himself Thus a most gross and palpable forgery was imposed on the Christian world, from the very midst of those best and purest ages; which, though rejected and derided from the beginning, by all men of sense among the heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, through all ages, without any other ground, to support it, but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of those venerable Fathers who contrived and attested it’ [1].

Here we have a long charge, entirely made up of blunders and misrepresentations. It is agreed on all sides, that there were extant, be-

[1] *Inquir. p. 33. 4. 5.*

fore the birth of Christ, certain books under the name of the *Sibyls*; but whether they contained, originally, any prophecies relating to Christ, is not so certain. From the most early ages of Christianity, we find them alledged, by several writers, in favour of our religion: to which the heathens answered, not as *Middleton* has it, that the Christians had forged the books, but that they had inserted into them some passages of their own composing. Yet they never were able to make good this charge: For, as *Origen* very judiciously observes, they ought to have pointed out the passages so inserted, and to have produced ancient and correct copies, in which those passages were wanting; which they never were able to do. Nor is it yet made out to satisfaction, by our modern criticks, that the passages referred to by the primitive Fathers were spurious; so far is it from being *a gross and palpable forgery*.

But be that as it will: though we should allow, that some spurious additions had been inserted into the *Sibylline* books; it is, at best, a manifest blunder, to impute the forgery to St. *Justin* himself. For, in his exhortation to the *Greeks*, near the end, he calls upon them, to believe the most ancient *Sibyl*, whose books, says he, are preserved through the whole world. How could this possibly have come to pass, if it had been a forgery of his own? Could he have corrupted all the copies in the world? Or could he have dispersed, through all places, copies which himself had falsified, especially at a time when the difficulty of publishing books, was so very great, as the Doctor has proved at large, in his *inquiry*?

quiry? [1]. Besides, we find that, before the time of St. *Justin*, there is mention made of the *Sibyl* as of one who had written on the subject of religion. *Hermas* in his *Pastor* relates that having, in a vision, received, from an unknown woman, a book, wherein were many things concerning religion, and being asked what he thought of that woman, his answer was, that he took her to be a *Sibyl*. A manifest proof that the forgery, if there was any, was prior to the time of St. *Justin*. From hence also it appears that *Hermas's* conscience was clear of the guilt of this forgery, which is rashly imputed to him; for who can believe that he would, on that awful occasion, have made such an answer; if he had been conscious to himself of having falsified the books? Neither can the fraud, with any probability, be charged on *Papias*: 1st. because he was posterior to *Hermas*: 2dly. because he is represented to have been unequal to such a work, which, the Doctor confesses, must have been written by the *ablest and most learned of the Christians*. See his remarks on anonymous observations [2].

But it is a shameful falsehood to assert, that the *Sibylline* verses obtained full credit in the Church, through all ages; or, as he expresses himself, in the remarks now mentioned, ' that they were cited by all the Fathers, and in all ages, from *Justin martyr's* time, down to the reformation, as genuin and inspired by God, in the same manner as the prophetic books of the old testament' [3]. In consequence of this, an inquisitive reader will, naturally, ex-

[1] p. 178, &c. Herm. l. vis. 2. [2] p. 31.

[3] p. 29.

pect to find the *Sibyl's* books numbered among the inspired writings, in the canon of holy scripture, as it was received before the reformation. But it is evident beyond all dispute, that they never were reckoned among the canonical books, and the Doctor could not well be ignorant of it: so that this may be added to the account of his many wilful misrepresentations. Moreover, in the same place of his *inquiry*, he has cited a passage out of St. *Austin's* treatise of the *city of God*, where that learned Father declares, he will not lay any stress on the *Sibylline* verses, because they may be suspected to have been forged by Christians [1]. He might likewise have discovered, if he had been a lover of truth, that these books never had full credit among the faithful, by that passage of *Origen* against *Celsus*, which he has misrepresented [2]. For *Origen* there tells us, that the Christians gave the name of *Sibyllists*, to such of their people as gave credit to those prophecies: which is very different from that turn which *Middleton* has given it; and manifestly shews, that the authority of those books was disputed among the Christians of those early times, as it is among the criticks at this day (g).

The whole charge, therefore, is reduced to this; that St. *Justin*, with many others, took some passages of the *Sibylline* verses to be genuin, which most criticks, at present, take to have

[1] l. 18. c. 46. 7.

[2] l. 5. con. Cels.

(g) This is manifest from another passage also of *Origen's* seventh book against *Celsus*: Where *Celsus* speaking of the *Sibyl* says, Σιβύλλην η̄ χρηματά την̄ οὐλῶν̄ the *Sibyl* whose authority is alledged by some of your people.

been forged. And what then? Shall we therefore conclude, that he was too weak a man to be believed, even in matters of fact which he had seen with his own eyes? If so, we must also maintain that no one is capable of judging of plain fact, but who is capable of distinguishing genuin writings, from such as are spurious.

But this is not all. 'St. Justin, he says, affirms that silly story concerning the Septuagint version of the old testament, that it was made by seventy elders, sent from Jerusalem to Egypt for that purpose, who being all shut up in so many separate cells, their translations were found to agree verbatim, from the beginning to the end' [1]. And moreover he declares 'that he himself had seen at Alexandria the remains of those very cells' [2]. Besides, in another place, speaking of the same matter, he is faulty in point of chronology, by saying that *Ptolemy* king of Egypt sent to *Herod* king of *Jerusalem*, to beg the assistance of those seventy translators.

The Septuagint Version.

To make the most of this, supposing that the name of *Herod* was not inserted, through mistake, by some transcriber, it is but an error in chronology. And as to the other part; it appears, by what he says, that he had seen at *Alexandria* certain cells, which, some body had informed him, were the cells wherein the seventy interpreters had translated the scriptures. But these mistakes are not of such a nature, as to ruin a person's credit, in every thing which he attests. If the Doctor could have proved that St. *Justin* never saw any cells at *Alexandria*, it would have

[1] Inq. p. 37.

[2] p. 38.

been

been to his purpose to do it. But as he hath not ; we shall still believe the Saint, when he tells us, that he saw such cells, though we are satisfied that he was misinformed, as to the story of the interpreters having been shut up in them, some hundreds of years before.

The Statue of Simon Magus. His next accusation is, that our holy martyr, in his Apology to the Emperor and senate of *Rome* ; charges them with paying divine honours to *Simon the Magician* ; and for the truth of this, appeals to a statue then subsisting in the island of the *Tiber*, with this inscription, **SIMONI DEO SANCTO** : which, says *Middleton*, is a gross blunder ; for the statue was dedicated to *Semo Sancus*, a *Sabine* deity ; as is clearly made out, by this inscription which was dug up in that very island, near two centuries ago, **SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO SACRUM**.

But, I believe, most men of sense will take this to be rather an extravagant surmise of the Doctor's, and of his masters, *Van-Dale* and *Le Clerc*, than a blunder of St. *Justin's*. The Saint was at *Rome*, when he presented that Apology, where there were thousands, who could have informed him better, if he had really made such a mistake. But the wide difference there is, between the two inscriptions, hardly leaves room for an error, to one that is not blind. Besides, St. *Irenaeus*, *Tertullian*, and St. *Austin* mention the same thing ; and *Theodoret* adds, that the statue was of brass, a circumstance not mentioned by St. *Justin*. Another thing may be observed, which the Doctor, for certain reasons, thought proper to omit ; that, in the inscription to *Semo Sancus*, it is mentioned, that it was done at the expence

expence of *Sextus Pompeius*, who had been dead many years before *Simon Magus* came to *Rome*: which was sufficient, to prevent any one's taking it for a statue erected to *Simon Magus*.

But the Doctor, after having gone through so much dirt, says, he cannot yet dismiss this Father, without taking notice, that he often accuses the *Jews* of having expunged several passages out of the greek bible; which accusations, the learned of these ages have found to be groundless: for that such passages are, in effect, spurious additions to the bible. And he tells us of an able critick and Protestant Divine, *John Croius*, who charges the forgery of those passages, and of the *Sibylline* oracles on St. *Justin* himself.

From all this, nothing more can be fairly deduced, but that the copies of the bible which St. *Justin* had, and on which he relied, were incorrect. As to that able critick, *John Croius*, he betrays his own malice and want of judgment, by imagining, that our holy martyr was such a downright fool, as to insert, fraudulently, a passage into his own copies, and then to accuse the *Jews* of having expunged it out of theirs. No man, of probity, would be guilty of so base an action: nor could any man in his senses expect to gain credit by so silly a contrivance.

And now, by way of a general answer, to all that has been alledged against the authority of St. *Justin*, it will not be improper to put the reader in mind, that, though this blessed martyr was liable to mistakes, as all men are; yet he was, even before his conversion to the faith of Christ, a man of great application to learning, he had gone through the several schools of the *Stoicks*, the *Peripateticks*, the *Pythagoreans* and the *Platonicks*.

nicks, in search of truth ; and had the sense to discover, that it was not to be found among them. Now, it is highly unreasonable to imagine, that he became a fool as soon as he became a Christian : the knowledge of our holy faith is not incompatible with good sense and learning ; it does not contract the mind of man ; on the contrary, it opens it to more extensive views. And as to the points of veracity and sincerity, it indispensably requires those qualities in every one of its disciples, learned or unlearned. Our Saint was so thoroughly sensible of his duty on this head, that he professed, he would rather lose his life, than save it by a lie. Why then should we suspect that he has wilfully deceived us by known forgeries ?

St. Irenæus. From St. *Justin* he passes on to St. *Irenæus*, whom he accuses of ' indulging a wild enthusiastick fancy, in the invention of typical senses and forced allusions, utterly trifling and contemptible ' [1]. But, of this enough has been said already. It is no wonder, that there are some who treat this method of interpretation, by allegory, with contempt : for, the sensual man does not understand the things that are of God, and is apt to blaspheme what he does not know.

His mistakes. As to some mistakes with which he is charged, viz. the error of the *millennium*, which he did not hold in the grossest sense of it ; the opinion of Angels mixing with the daughters of men ; the story of the *Septuagint* version, and of the restoring of the scriptures by *Esdras*, after they had been lost in the *Babylonish*

[1] Inq. p. 51.

captivity: these mistakes, I say, would serve as well to prove, that he had lost his eye-sight; as they do to prove, that he is not worthy to be believed, in any thing whatever he attests, even plain facts to which he was an eye-witness.

But let us, now, take a view of what the Doctor has urged against this Saint in particular. One objection is, that he affirms our Saviour lived to an old age; or was fifty years old at the least, at the time of his crucifixion [1]. Which opinion, I confess, is singular, and contrary to the common sentiments of the faithful. Another objection is, that he says, [2] *Enoch* and *Elias* were translated into that very paradise, from which *Adam* was expelled, to remain there till the consummation of all things. Which absurd opinion, says *Middleton*, is affirmed by all the later Fathers, both Greek and Latin [3]. But then, he tells us, in the same place, that St. *Austin* does not allow it to be a point of faith. And, as to the opinion itself, I can see no harm in it.

But the Doctor, surely, had a mind to surprize his readers, with something great and wonderful; when he tells us, that, according to the principles of the Church of *Rome*; the positive testimony of *Irenaeus*, is of weight enough, to bear down the common sense and reason of mankind [4].

Luckily for the Church of *Rome*, before he is advanced a dozen lines farther, he forgets himself, and makes use of the testimony of *Tillemont*, a catholick writer, to prove that this Saint had embraced some false opinions [5]. The same has happened to him, on several other occasions: for

[1] *Iren.* I. 2. c. 22.

[2] *Iren.* I. 5. c. 5.

[3] *Inq.* p. 49.

[4] *ibid.*

[5] p. 50.

he seldom goes far, after his rash assertions, before he is entangled, contradicts and confutes himself. But to speak to the point : if the Doctor was persuaded, that he uttered the truth concerning our principles ; he must have been most shamefully ignorant of them, and therefore very unfit to write against them. But if he knew, as I cannot but suspect he did, that he advanced a notorious falsehood ; I do not see what can be said for it, only that his zeal against Popery had eaten up all sense of shame in him. Against such glaring slander, it is sufficient to declare, that neither the testimony of *Irenæus*, nor any other authority whatever, is weighty enough to prevail with us, *in contradiction to the dictates of reason*. Though we acknowledge ourselves bound to submit to the authority of God, in things which are *above the reach of common sense and reason*. And *Middleton* must have acknowledged the same, if he believed the first principles of Christianity.

St. Irenæus's character.

This is what he has collected, in order to determine the real character of this primitive Father. Let the impartial reader judge of the equity of such a proceeding. Some few mistakes are mentioned ; every thing besides is suppressed. I do not wonder, indeed that nothing is said in commendation of the five books, which this Saint wrote against the hereticks of those early times ; because, the same arguments which are there urged in defence of the catholick Church of those days, are of equal force against the reformers of later times ; and therefore, such a work could not but be highly displeasing to one of *Middleton's* temper. Nevertheless, since he was resolved to bring the character of this Father to a trial, he ought, according to the rules of justice

justice and right reason, to have summed up the evidence on both sides, and have put into the balance, against those mistakes, his labours for the cause of God, his suffering unto death for his faith, and the high commendations which have been given him, for his learned works, by the most illustrious writers of the primitive as well as later ages, by *Tertullian, Eusebius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Basil, St. Jerom, St. Austin, Theodore &c.*; whose testimonies, in favour of *Irenæus's* character, ought to have been produced, in a fair trial; because, some people may possibly think, that they were as able judges of good sense and real merit, as a *Middleton* or a *Whithy*.

§ 5. As to the question about the veracity of these two Fathers, *Justin* and *Irenæus*; he says, ‘ it may admit perhaps some debate, and it will probably be thought harsh, in the opinion of many, to suspect men of such piety and sanctity of life, either of the invention, or the propagation of known forgeries ’ [1]. Nevertheless, harsh as it may seem, he makes no difficulty to affirm, that they have given us too much cause for such a suspicion: for, they frequently appeal to *tradition*, in support of their mistakes; which pretended tradition could not possibly be true: and if we absolve them from the forgery; it must be charged on somebody else, more ancient.

Veracity
of SS.
Justin and
Irenæus
questioned
by Middle-
ton.

But why a forgery? Because it was not true, must it therefore be a known forgery? Is there no such a thing as an *innocent mistake* which is neither one nor the other? Must every servant,

[1] *Inq.* p. 58.

for instance, who happens to mistake the orders which have been given him, be deemed a cheat and impostor? I believe the Doctor would have taken it very ill, to have had his own logick turned upon himself, with the honourable title of *impostor*, for every mistake which he has made. In a word, this silly argument does not prove, that there was any forgery at all in the case, much less, that these holy martyrs were guilty of it.

Tradition. But since he has turned his remarks, on this head, chiefly against the use of tradition; it will be proper to be a little more particular in discussing this subject. In order to this, let it be previously observed, that when we speak of *tradition*, as a part of the rule of faith, we mean the tradition of such divine truths only, as were taught by the Apostles by word of mouth, and have been, ever since, preserved and taught, by an uninterrupted succession of bishops, throughout all ages. The whole sacred depositum, or every article of faith, was delivered by the Apostles to their successors; first of all, by oral tradition only: afterwards indeed part of it was occasionally committed to writing, but this did not any ways detract from the authority of the other part, which was not written; both being equally the word of God. From this it appears that the *origin* of tradition is derived from Christ and his Apostles.

Let us now see the account which *Middleton* gives of it. 'Here we see in short, says he, the origin and history of tradition. *Papias*, a weak and silly man, who mistook the sense of the Apostles, was the first who made it his particular busines, to recommend the use it. And for that purpose took the pains to collect several 'fabulous

‘ fabulous stories, which the authority of so venerable a person imposed upon the Church for ‘ genuin’ [1].

Here, again, the Doctor has forgot what he had said, but two leaves before ; where this pretended tradition is set off as a *wicked forgery*, and the veracity of two holy martyrs brought into suspicion about it : whereas now, it is only a *mistake* made by *Papias*, a weak man. But how could *Papias* possibly be the first, who recommended the use of tradition ? It is certain, that Christ and his Apostles taught the whole gospel-revelation, for many years, by oral tradition only : and St. *Paul* frequently recommends it in his epistles. *Brethren stand fast : and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle* [2]. *Papias*, therefore, was not the first who recommended tradition ; but only, the first among the Catholicks, as far as we know, who recommended the error of the *Millennium*, which, through mistake, he imagined to be a tradition of the Apostles ; in which he was followed by St. *Justin*, St. *Irenæus* and three or four others of note.

But did their mistake impose this error upon the Church, for the *genuin* doctrine of the Apostles ? Far from it : the opposite true tradition was constantly preserved, by the rest of the Church, and, as it always will happen, prevailed, after some time, to the utter extinction of that error. Even St. *Justin* himself, who embraced it, gives us to understand, that it was but regarded as a matter of *opinion*, and was denied by many, who received the Christian doctrine in all its purity and sanctity.

[1] Inq. p. 62. [2] 2 Thes. 11. 14. 1 Cor. xi. 2.
2 Tim. 1. 13.

In the beginning of the third century it was refuted by *Caius* a learned priest of *Rome*, who is supposed to have been a disciple of St. *Irenæus* [1]. In the same age *Origen* treated it as a fiction, in several parts of his works [2]. About the middle of the same century, St. *Dionysius* bishop of *Alexandria* wrote against it [3]. And *Eusebius* relates, that, after it was come to such a height, in one part of *Egypt*, as to occasion disturbances and schisms, the said St. *Dionysius* assembled the people together, and by a conference, which lasted three days, brought them over to the truth, *Corracion* their leader declaring himself to be fully satisfied and renouncing the error [4]. In the fourth century it was refuted by *Eusebius* [5] and by St. *Ephrem* [6].

Nevertheless, the Doctor thinks, that this is sufficient to ruin the credit of tradition for ever.

Since the very earliest, says he, of all traditions, and the nearest to the fountain's head, are found to be so corrupt; it will demonstrate, at least, what a treacherous foundation they must be, to build any opinion upon, and much more any article of our faith [7].

But, he ought to have reflected, that, if *false traditions* are any prejudice to the authority of *true ones*, it will follow that *false gospels* likewise must prejudice the authority of those which are really *inspired*. In those early ages, both spurious traditions and spurious writings were set forth, under the title of *Apostolical*: but the Church, guided by the spirit of God, detected what was

[1] Euseb. hist. 1. 3. c. 28. [2] Orig. hom. 1. in cant.

and 1. 2. *περὶ ἀρχῶν* c. 13. [3] Hieron. 1. 18. in *Isaiah*

[4] 1. 7. c. 24. [5] 1. 3. c. 39. [6] Opusc. iii.

[7] Inq. p. 63.

false and maintained what was true. In consequence of which, we are persuaded, as every one who judges impartially must be, that the apostolical traditions, which are preserved and maintained in the Church, are as secure a foundation to build our faith upon, as the apostolical writings; since both of them descend originally from the same inspired teachers, both have been preserved with equal fidelity, and both are insured to us, as genuine by the same authority. But, I wonder how he came to discover that those false traditions were the earliest of all traditions. *Papias* mistook the doctrine of the Apostles, it is true; but I cannot conceive how his mistake could be prior to their doctrine. Let this stand as another sample of the Doctors logick, by the help of which he can transform every mistake into a forgery, and prove that the corruption of truth is older than the truth itself.

But to proceed: he exemplifies the uncertainty of tradition, by two other instances taken from the history of the first centuries. The first is, that most ancient and celebrated dispute which, he says, subsisted between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, about the time of holding their *Easter*; in which, both sides severally alledged apostolical tradition, for their different practice.

With regard to this, it may be observed, that there does not appear, either in scriptures or tradition, any divine command, which determines the day for the holding of *Easter*. Perhaps St. *John* might have kept it in *Asia* on any day of the week indiscriminately; and St. *Peter*, on no day but Sunday, at *Rome*. So that each side might justly plead the practice of an Apostle. But the Church, afterwards, thought fit to ordain one

uniform practice in this article, throughout the world, and preferred the practice of *Rome* to that of *Asia*. The like difference of practice may be remarked in several other points. As for instance, a certain conformity with some of the legal ceremonies of the *Jewish* law, and the observation of that temporary precept of the Apostles, to abstain from blood and things strangled, were kept up in some Churches longer than they were in others: such a difference being no bar to catholick communion, so long as the Church does not insist upon an uniformity. It is scarce worth while, to notice the blunder which he has made, in saying that the dispute was between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches; whereas, in truth, it was between the bishops of *Asia Minor* and some neighbouring prelates, on one side; and all the rest of the world on the other.

His second instance he takes to be a most convincing proof, and, for fear lest we should suffer it to pass unobserved, introduces it with the solemnity of a *Nota Bene*, 'N. B. Nothing more effectually demonstrates the uncertainty of tradition, than what is delivered to us by antiquity, concerning this very *Papias*. *Irenæus* declares him to have been the companion of *Polycarp*, and the disciple of St. *John* the Apostle. But *Eusebius* tells us, that he was not a disciple of *John* the Apostle, but of *John* called the Elder or *Presbyter*, who was a companion onely of the Apostles' [1].

To this effectual demonstration we may answer, in short, that it is nothing to the faith of the Church, nor any part of Christ's doctrine, whether

[1] *Ing*; p. 63.

the master of *Papias* were St. John the Evangelist, or a different person of the same name. The Apostles delivered, to their successors, the whole divine doctrine, with a charge to them, that they should teach the same, and deliver it down whole and entire to others, who were to succeed after them ; and so on, to the end of the world. And we are assured, by the promises of Christ himself, that our holy faith will always be preserved, by these guardians, sound and uncorrupted. But as to particular historical facts, such as that of *Papias's* master, they are no part of a *bishop's charge*, nor is he bound to preserve the memory of them. That is the proper work of *historians* ; which if they neglect, and the remembrance of such fact, or such person's name, be lost or rendered uncertain, through their negligence, the certainty of the Church's doctrine is not in the least affected by it ; no more than it is, by the uncertainty we are in, whether *Brutus the Trojan* ever reigned in *Britain*, or not.

Here we may add what he has borrowed from *Chillingworth*, in these words. ‘ If *Papias* could either by his own error, or a desire to deceive, cozen the Fathers of the purest ages in this error of the *Millennium*, why not also in other things ? Why not in twenty, as well as one ? And why might not twenty others do it, as well as he ? ’ [1].

This sophistry can be of no service to the protestant cause, unless we were to grant, that Christ promised the same protection to each single *bishop*, as to the whole Church ; which is certainly false. To the Church he promised, that the gates of

[1] *Inq.* p. 51.

hell shall never prevail against her ; but, notwithstanding this, any single bishop may fall away from the faith. So *Papias* might lead some bishops of his time, into a mistake about the *Millennium* ; but Christ preserved his Church from falling into the same error. So again, several bishops were cozened into heresy by *Arius* ; but the Church stood firm, and maintained the truth. Such defections of her pastors are losses to the Church, but that she never will receive such a loss as to be destroyed by it, we are assured by the word of God.

So far I have accompanied him, in his arguments against tradition : and though enough has been already said, yet I must beg leave to add here, in few words, first, that the authority of the Church is the secure test by which both the *writings* and *traditions* of the Apostles are distinguished from such as are *spurious* and *apocryphal*: secondly, that no good reason can be assigned by Protestants, why they reject the traditions, and yet receive the writings ; seeing that they are both equally recommended, as Apostolical, by the same authority.

Magici-
an. Here I might leave this article of the doctrines and opinions of these primitive Fathers, only that the Doctor says, he cannot dismiss it, without first ' taking notice ' of one opinion, which was universally received ' and believed, through all ages of the primitive ' Church, *viz.* that there were a number of *Ma-*
gicians, Necromancers or Conjurers, both among ' the Gentiles and the Hæretical Christians [1]. ' And, as the whole system of Pagan Idolatry was

[1] Inq. p. 66.

believed,

believed, by the Fathers, to have been managed by the craft and agency of *Daemons*, so the whole art of magic was supposed also to be carried on, by the same powers, for the sake of deluding and destroying mankind Now the opinion, which I have here explained, is not only a proof of the grossest credulity, but of that peculiar species of it, which, of all others, lays a man most open to the delusive arts of impostors.' [1].

Who would have expected, that such an objection as this, should come from the pen of one who professes to believe the scriptures? Is it a proof of the grossest credulity, to believe that there have been magicians; when the inspired writings, both of the old and new law, positively attest it? Was there not, in the time of the Apostles, *a certain man named Simon who before had been a magician in that city, seducing the people of Samaria And they gave heed to him, because, for a long time, he had bewitched them with his magical practices?* [2]. And history informs us, that his heretical disciples were addicted to the same art, and by the help of sorcery endeavoured, in vain, to equal the true miracles which were wrought in the catholick Church. Again, did not St. Paul and Barnabas find *a magician and false prophet at Paphos*, whose name was Bar-jesu [3]? And, at Ephesus, did not many of them, that had followed *curious arts*, bring their books together, and burn them before all [4]? Does not St. Paul say of the wicked one, supposed to be *Antichrist*, that his coming is accord-

[1] Inq. p. 70.

[2] Acts viii.

[3] Acts xiii.

[4] Acts xix.

ing to the working of Satan, in all power and signs and lying wonders? And must we either disbelieve these verities, so manifestly delivered in the sacred scriptures, or be accused of the grossest credulity? If so, I must leave the reader to judge whether the Doctor has not ruined the credit of his own rule of faith. Yet all this is necessary, for the support of the protestant religion against the Church of *Rome*.

Again, we cannot but be of the same opinion with the primitive Fathers, that the system of pagan idolatry was managed by the craft and agency of *Demons*. And this for two reasons. The first is, the authority of those Fathers who relate many instances of the devils being compelled by Christians to acknowledge it, and of their being put to flight, and the sacrifices rendered ineffectual by the faithful, who, happening to be present, made the sign of the cross on their foreheads. The other reason is still more cogent, being the testimony of God both in the old and new testament. *They provoked him by strange gods they sacrificed to devils and not to God [1]. All the gods of the Gentiles are devils [2] The things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils [3].*

But, perhaps, the Doctor did not much regard these authorities: I shall therefore produce another, to which, I believe, he would have had no exception. It is the testimony, not of a *credulous Christian*, but of *Porphyry*, the bitter enemy of Christianity, who, as he is quoted by *Eusebius* in his 5th book *de Præp. Evang.* c. 6. allows that the gods were compelled, by magical arts,

[1] Deut. xxxii. 17. [2] Ps. xvi. [3] 1. Cor. x.
to

to be subservient to the wickedness of men. And he asks *Anebon*, the *Egyptian*, to assist him in reconciling these things together, *viz.* how the gods, who command men to be just, yet themselves do many unjust things, when commanded by wicked men. The same *Eusebius*, in the chapter following, proves, that the pagan gods must have been the first inventors and teachers of magick, because men could not, by any other means, have acquired the knowledge of it. For which, he refers again to the words of *Porphyry*, who says: ‘The gods have made known to men, not only the system of their worship, but also by what things they may be pleased, or prevailed upon, or even compelled. What sort of sacrifices are to be offered, what days to be avoided, the figure of their idols, the forms in which they appear, and what places they haunt’ [1]. Upon which St. *Austin* observes, that this great philosopher, with all his learning, was unable to unfold, or afraid to reject, the intricacies of this diabolical system, which every old woman, among the Christians, understands with ease, and detests without fear [2].

§. 6. After this, the Doctor goes on to take a particular review of the several gifts, or miraculous powers, which were actually claimed by the primitive Church; as the gift of *raising the dead*, of *healing the sick*, of *casting out devils*, of *prophesying*, of *seeing visions*, of *discovering the secrets of men*, of *expounding the scriptures*, and of *speaking with tongues*. I shall go through his remarks on each of these gifts, and take notice of every

[1] *Euseb.* l. 5. *Præp. Evang.* c. 7. *Vers. Trapez.* alias 10:[2] *Aug.* l. x. *de Civ.* c. xi

thing material, which he has alledged in favour of his general system.

Gift of raising the dead. The first gift, *viz.* that of raising the dead, though positively asserted by St. *Irenæus*, yet seems to the Doctor, to be utterly incredible, on many accounts. ‘First, that a case of so wonderful a nature should be common among them, yet not a single instance of it particularly described or clearly attested in all history. Secondly, that it should be performed in every part of the world, where there was a Church or assembly of Christians; yet all those, who were not of the Church, and for whose sake it was chiefly performed, should be insisting all the while, that the thing itself was impossible. Thirdly, that it should be common in the days of *Irenæus*, yet *Theophilus*, who lived at the same time, should not be able to alledge a single instance of it, when challenged to it by his friend.’ [1].

To his first reason, we oppose the clear and positive testimony of St. *Irenæus*, who asserts the fact, against those hereticks that denied the possibility of it: and though he has not mentioned all the circumstances, which an incredulous inquirer may look for; I do not see how that can detract from his credibility, as a witness. If he is worthy to be believed, *on account of his veracity*, his testimony is as good in a short account, as in one that is more circumstantial.

His second reason is wholly made up of mistakes. St. *Irenæus* does not say, that this miracle was wrought in every part of the world, where there

[1] *Inq.* p. 74.

was a christian Church ; but only, that when the whole Church of the place has made joint supplication for it, on account of some urgent necessity, in that case God has often (he does not say *always*) granted their request, and raised the dead to life.

But how could this be, says the Doctor, and yet those persons, for whose sake it was chiefly performed, be still insisting that the thing was impossible ?

This may be answered by putting another question much to the same purpose. *viz.* How could it possibly be true, that Christ raised *Lazarus* from the dead, when the *Sadducees* still persisted in affirming that the thing itself was impossible ? The obstinacy of an unbeliever is no argument against the reality of a miracle, as is evident in the case of the *Jews*, who would not believe Christ, though he wrought incontestable miracles, for their conviction. But who were they, of whom St. *Irenæus* speaks in that place ? They were the followers of those two archheretics, *Simon* and *Carpocrates*, who denied the possibility, not only of raising a dead man to life by a miracle, but also of the *general resurrection* of the flesh ; acknowledging no other resurrection, than that of coming to the profession of their pretended truth. They persisted in the denial of these two articles, notwithstanding the plain evidence of the gospel for the particular resurrection of *Lazarus*, and for a general one at the last day. What wonder then, that they should do the same, with regard to the facts mentioned by St. *Irenæus* ?

His third reason, taken from the answer made by *Theophilus*, bishop of *Antioch*, to his friend *Autolycus*, is as little to the purpose, as the foregoing.

going. *Theophilus*, near the end of his first book, speaks thus to *Autolycus* : ' Besides, you deny the resurrection of the dead : for you say : Shew me but one man raised from the dead, that I may believe, when I have seen. But what great matter is it, if after you have seen the thing, you believe it ? You believe that *Hercules* lives, who destroyed himself by fire ; and that *Esculapius* was raised to life, after he had been thunderstruck. And will you disbelieve what God says ? In like manner, though I were to shew you one raised from the dead and now living, you would disbelieve that also ? ' It does not follow, from this answer, that *Theophilus* was not able to alledge one single instance of a person raised from the dead ; but only, that he did not think it necessary to satisfy the vain curiosity of *Autolycus*, in a matter which was not likely to have any good effect upon him. For, why should he persist in denying the resurrection of the dead, for want of proper evidence ; when, in reality, he already believed it, with regard to *Hercules* and *Esculapius*. But though *Theophilus* had allowed, which he did not, that there was no person, at that time, living in the neighbourhood of *Antioch*, who had been so raised : or though he had confessed, that himself had not that *strong and eminent faith*, which might prompt him to expect a divine interposition, to satisfy his friend ; such a confession would not have prejudiced our assertion. For it is not to be expected, that miracles are to be wrought, whenever they are called for. Even Christ himself, who was the absolute master of such wonderful works, and could perform them whenever, and on whatever occasion, he pleased, nevertheless would not satisfy the *Jews* when they called

called out : *Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him* [1].

The next gift, which he proceeds to examine, is that of healing the sick, which was sometimes done by imposition of hands, sometimes by invoking the name of God, and sometimes by the use of blessed oil &c. So *Tertullian* relates, that a Christian, called *Proculus*, cured the Emperor *Severus* of a certain distemper, by the use of oil ; for which service, that Emperor was favourable afterwards to the Christians, and kept *Proculus*, as long as he lived, in his palace [2]. This account is circumstantial enough, as are many others of the like cures. But the Doctor is of opinion that, if they be true, they may be accounted for, without a miracle, by the natural efficacy of the oil itself, which has been known to cure the bite of a viper. In the same manner, I presume, he would account for the miraculous cures done by the Apostles themselves, who *anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them* [3]. However, it will be best to leave it, to be determined by the faculty of physicians, whether every other ailment, as well as the bite of a viper, may be cured by the natural power of oil.

But he soon leaves this evasion, to return to his old plea of cheat and imposture : in support of which he observes, that the pretence of curing diseases, by a miraculous power, was maintained in the heathen world, and not denied nor detected by the Christians, but ascribed by them to the power of demons or evil spirits deluding man-

Gift of
healing
the sick.

[1] Mat. xxvii. 42.

[2] Tert. I. ad Scap. § 4.

[3] Mar. vi. 14.

kind. Yet it is certain, ' he says, that all these ' heathen miracles were pure forgeries contrived ' to delude the credulous multitude ' [i] though the belief of them is supported by publick monuments, which were erected in the temple of *Esculapius*, and in other places. For which reason, he thinks, we ought to suspect the same, of such miraculous cures as are related to have been done in the Church of God.

For my part, I think, it betrays a great want of judgment, to set the Church of God and Paganism on the same footing, in point of credit and authority. Surely, Christians are most worthy to be believed of the two, as professing and living up to more strict morals, and being withdrawn, by more powerful and more engaging motives, from all fraud and deceit. Besides, Christians are, in a peculiar manner, the children of God, his chosen people, disciples of a sublime doctrine revealed from heaven; and are, therefore, more likely to be favoured with a manifestation of the divine power, than the Pagans were, who, to the dishonour of God, embraced a false abominable religion, invented by demons, and supported by their delusive powers, and by the craft of wicked men. So that the very nature of the thing shews it to be more reasonable to believe Christians, than Pagans, in their accounts of such wonderful works.

However, though the Doctor says it is certain, that all those cures, said to have been performed by *Esculapius*, were pure forgeries; yet, I cannot be of opinion, that they were all *forgeries*, as he understands it; that is, that they were owing to

[i] Inq. p. 79.

the craft and contrivance of men. It is much more reasonable to think, that *many* of them were effected by the power of demons. For the better understanding of which it may be observed, that, though the devils have not power to do any thing, which is truly supernatural and miraculous; yet, they are able to do many surprizing things, by their greater *natural strength* and more *extensive knowledge*, when God suffers them to exert it. By the help of this knowledge, they can cure such diseases as are naturally curable, because they know the properties of such natural medicines, as are fit for the purpose. In this manner, they performed some cures, to deceive a people, who, on account of their sins, were justly abandoned to such delusions. Another way which they had of imposing on mankind, was, when God permitted it, first to afflict a person with some disorder, and then, upon application made to them, to withdraw the affliction, by which means they seemed to cure, when, in effect, they did but cease to hurt. To such contrivances as these, several of the cures, related to have been performed among the heathens, are undoubtedly to be ascribed.

In like manner, they deceived the heathen world by their oracles; in the management of which, though there was much fraud, so that a heathen could discover that the *Delphick Priestess* philippized; yet, in some cases, there were plain indications of the power and intercourse of demons. As, when they told what was doing, at the same time, in different and far distant parts of the world: or as, when *Trajan*, to try the oracle of *Heliopolis*, sent to desire an answer to what was in his letter, which was but a blank paper sealed up, the oracle

K 2 directed

directed that a blank paper should be sealed up, and sent to him, for an answer. But, as to future events, which may, or may not happen, it is above the power of the devils to foretell them; and therefore, their predictions of futurity were but conjectures, wrapped up in ambiguous terms, to leave room for some evasion or other.

But these portentous works, which, by their glimmering, deceived the heathen world, were soon overpowered by the superiour brightness of the miracles wrought by Christians. The devils were driven away, their oracles ceased, their rites were abolished, and a total change was brought into the world; which one cannot well conceive how it could have been effected, if the Christians claim, to miraculous powers, had been as weak and delusive as was that of the Pagans.

What the Doctor adds in the close of this Section, *viz.* that we ought to pay no regard to the accounts of miraculous healings, unless we knew, more precisely, the real bounds between nature and miracle, is very absurd: because, though we are not able to determine the exact bounds, so as to tell, precisely, that nature can go so far, and no farther; yet, it is easy to know that there are some cures, which cannot be ascribed to the strength of nature. Besides, according to this argument, we ought to suspend our belief of all the miraculous healings mentioned in the scriptures, till we have learned, which we never shall on this side the grave, the precise bounds between nature and miracle. And indeed, all that he has said relating to this gift of healing the sick, is of equal force against the gospel accounts, as against those which are given by the primitive Christians: for, both alike may, by an unbeliever, be ascribed to the

the strength of nature, and the heathens had their false pretensions against both alike ; which is enough to make one suspect, that he was equally inclined to deny them both.

§ 7. The next gift which he discusses, is that of casting out devils, on which the Fathers lay great stress towards evincing the divinity of the christian religion, and not without reason ; for, as our Redeemer said of himself, *If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you* [1]. But, to the Doctor, the argument does not seem to be worth a straw ; because, such demoniacks appear, to him, to have been affected rather with the epilepsy or falling sickness, than possessed or tormented by evil spirits : for, they were frequently thrown down to the ground, they were convulsed, their eyes were distorted, they foamed at the mouth &c. And, as to the confessions of the devils, owning themselves to be wicked spirits, that, he says, may be accounted for, either by the disordered state of the patients, or by the arts of imposture and contrivance between the parties concerned in the act [2].

Now, suppose we were to grant more than is true, *viz.* that such persons were not possessed by devils, but were only epileptic : I cannot see what advantage could accrue to his system, from that. The cure of an epilepsy, effected by the prayers and exorcisms of the Church, must needs be miraculous, and, on that account, inconsistent with his principles. But, his reason, why he cannot think such persons were demoniacks, is really very weak ; as appears from the accounts of the

Gift of
casting out
devils.

[1] *Luc. xi. 20.* [2] *Inq. p. 80 and 82.*

demoniacks dispossessed by Christ and his Apostles, which are of the same nature. In the gospel of St. Mark we read: *And one of the multitude said: Master I have brought to thee my son, who bath a dumb spirit. And wheresoever he taketh him, he dasheth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth and pineth away And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him: and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming [1].* And shall we say that this too was an epilepsy? If so; the Doctor must have had very little concern for the authority of the scriptures, the whole and sole rule of his faith.

As to the confessions of the devils, mentioned both in the gospel and by the primitive Fathers, they were uniform, and all tending to one and the same point, *viz.* to make known the weakness of those infernal spirits, in comparison of the superior power of Christ: whereas, had they been only effects of the disordered state of the patients, they would have been wild, incoherent and senseless, without any particular tendency, like all the other reveries of a delirious brain.

Neither can such confessions, with any appearance of reason, be ascribed to fraud and imposture concerted between the parties concerned in the act. Many of those, out of whom the devils were ejected, were heathens, and of course, enemies of the christian religion. Now, it is highly unreasonable to suspect, that the enemies of Christ would conspire to promote the interest of his cause, to the ruin of their own. Besides, the primitive Fathers were continually pressing their

adversaries with this argument, and proving the divine power of Christ, by these victories over the demons ; which would naturally provoke the Pagans, to use their utmost endeavours to defeat that argument, by detecting the imposture. Nor is there any likelihood that it could have escaped a detection, for so many centuries ; if the case had been as *Middleton* has represented it. Surely, out of such numbers as must have been engaged in it, some one or other would have been induced, either by fair promises, or by threats and tortures, to have confessed the fraud ; which would have put an effectual stop to any farther urging of that argument. Yet nothing of this appears in history ; nor did the Fathers ever cease to press and confute the heathens, with those confessions of the devils ; by which great numbers were brought over to the faith of Christ, many of them men of exquisite sense, as cautious and as clear-sighted as our Doctor himself, men who had undoubtedly examined, with the utmost circumspection, into the merits of the cause, and had fully satisfied themselves, that there was no cheat in the pretensions of the Christians, before they took that important step of embracing their religion.

Nevertheless, he is persuaded, that his system will appear probable to every one, who considers the credulous and enthusiastick disposition of the Fathers, and their preconceived and erroneous notions, about the origin and power of demons.

It is an easy matter to charge the Fathers, at random, with erroneous notions, about the origin and power of demons : but as we are not disposed, to take his bare word, for the truth of

all that he says against them; we shall require, first, that he specify what those notions were; and secondly, that he prove them to be erroneous. As to the power and malice of those infernal spirits, which is the only point, that seems to have any relation to the present question, one needs but read the scriptures to be convinced of it. It appears manifestly in all the accounts of those who were infested by devils, and freed by Christ and his Apostles. It appears in the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians. *Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places* [1]. It is no less evidently taught by St. Peter in his first epistle: *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith* [2]. From which passages, if the Doctor had studied his own rule of faith, he might have conceived some notions of the devil's power and malice, than which nothing is more explicitly delivered in the sacred writings.

' Notwithstanding this, he thinks it is very ' hard to believe what *Origen* declares; that ' the devils for the sake of doing greater mis- ' chief to men, used to possess and destroy their ' *cattel*' [3]. But it is much harder to conceive why he should make a difficulty of believing it; since we read in the gospel that the unclean spi-
rits entered into the swine and drove them head-
long into the sea, being about 2000 [4].

[1] C. vi. 12.

[2] C. v. 8.

[3] Inq. p. 88.

[4] Mar. v. 13.

He observes moreover, that the Fathers allow the same power, of casting out devils, to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, both before and after the coming of Christ. And as they were deceived in this; so they might be deceived by their own exorcists.

But he should first have proved that the Fathers were really imposed upon, in what they allow to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before he brought that for an argument to persuade us, that they were either deceived by their own exorcists, or else knowingly opposed one cheat to another. As to the heathens, it has been already explained how they might, and did, by magical arts and the agency of demons, make the deluded people think they were delivered from the evil spirits. But these illusions were soon dissipated by the extraordinary powers which Christ had granted to his Church. As to the *Jews*, St. *Justin* and St. *Irenæus* mention that they sometimes cast out devils, by the name of *Jesus*, and by the name of the God of *Abraham* and of *Isaac* and of *Jacob*: which tended to the confirmation of the superior power of those names, and to the destruction of the devils empire. Of such as these our Lord seems to have spoken, when he said to the *Jews*, *If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out* [1]? The same appears from the words of St. *John* to Christ. *Master we saw one casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him: But Jesus said. Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, that can soon speak ill of me* [2]. And from the express words

[1] *Luc. xi. 19.*[2] *Mar. ix. 37.*

of Christ, we learn, that miracles may be wrought, in his name, by wicked men. *Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord have not we prophesied in thy name, and done many wonderful things in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name? And then I will profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity* [3]. From whence we may gather, that the working of miracles is no proof of the sanctity of the agent: but when God doth cooperate with such ministers, to the working of such effects, it always tends to the confirmation of some truth, or to some good end, but never to the establishing or supporting of an error.

But to return to the point: since this gift of casting out devils, is what the Fathers lay great stress upon, to prove the divinity of the Christian religion; therefore, the Doctor, as a token of his love for that religion, thinks it proper to strengthen all that he has said against it, by some particular observations, which he recommends to the attention of his reader.

The first is, that the uniformity, which appears in all the accounts of the demoniacs given by different Fathers, and in different ages, seems to shew, that they were all copies of one original story, and not descriptions of what happened at different times, and in distant places.

What it is he means by this, is hard to tell. It is manifest, to every one who can read, that the Fathers speak of such things as were transacted severally in their own times, to which any one might be an eye witness. And as to the uniformity of such accounts, it is an argument

[1] Mat. viii. 22.

rather in their favour, than against them: because when the same effects are related to have been brought about by the same means, with no other difference but that of time and place, it is natural to expect that the accounts, in general, will be uniform.

Secondly; he observes that the persons in whom the devils use to hold discourses were called by the primitive Christians Ἐγγεγμένοι or *Ventriloquists*, because they seemed to speak out of their belly. And he has discovered, that there are certain persons who can, by a particular formation of their organs, managed by art and practice, speak in such a manner as to persuade the company, that the voice does not proceed from them, but from some invisible being. And if we suppose that there were many artists of this kind among those ancient Christians, it is easy to imagine what strange and surprizing feats might be performed, by a correspondence between the *Ventriloquist* and *Exorcist*.

I will not insist on the improbability of this ridiculous supposition, that among the primitive Christians, such numbers should have had that particular formation of their organs, whereas so few are found to have it in our days. I say, I will not insist on this; but only answer, that it is morally impossible, the fraud should have escaped being detected through so many ages. For considering the great numbers, both of friends and enemies, who must have been, some way or other, concerned in it, it is wholly incredible, that not so much as one of them all, should ever, either through inadvertence, or designedly, betray the secret.

As to the name of Ἐγγαρμένοι or *Ventriloquists*, it was appropriated to those persons who gave answers by means of a familiar spirit speaking within them. The same are called in Latin *Pythones*: and are represented in the holy scriptures as persons possessed; or as holding communication with evil spirits. So we read in the acts of the Apostles: *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain girl, possessed with a pythonical spirit, met us, who brought her masters much gain by divining. This same following Paul and us cried out saying. These men are the servants of the most high God, who shew you the way to salvation...* But Paul being grieved turned and said to the spirit: *I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to go out from her. And he went out the same hour.* [1]. And in divers places of the old testament, where the Septuagint version uses the word Ἐγγαρμένοι; the Latin Vulgate has that of *Pythones*, or *Magi*, and the English Protestant version renders it, *familiar spirits* (b). And if the authority of a heathen writer be necessary, we have that of *Plutarch*, in his book of the *ceasing of Oracles*, where he expressly says that Ἐγγαρμένοι and *Pythones* are terms used to signify the same thing (i).

(b) Lev. xix. v. 31. Septuag. ἐκ ἵπακολεθτέετε ἐγγαρμένοις. Latin Vulg. Non declinetis ad magos. English Prot. Regard not them that have familiar spirits. C. xx v. 27. Ἄντε οὐ γυνὴ ὁσ ἀν γένεται ἀνδρὶ ἐγγαρμένος. οὐ ἵπακοδες θανάτῳ θανατεσθωσαν αἱμόθετοι. Lat. Vulg. Vir siue mulier in quibus pythonicus vel divinationis fuerit spiritus, morte moriantur. Engl. Prot. A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. See also Deut. xviii. v. 11. And 1. of Kings alias Samuel: xxviii. v. 7. and many other places.

(i) Plutarch. I. de defect. orac. Ὡσπερ τὰς ἐγγαρμένας, Εγγαρίας πάλαι, νηὶ Πύθωνας προσαγορευομένας.

His

His third observation is, that many of those demoniacks could not be cured by all the power of the exorcists; and that the cures, which are pretended to have been wrought on any, were but temporary, and did not reduce the patients to a permanent state of sanity.

This is strange indeed. In the foregoing observation he had detected a number of cunning artists, who, by a correspondence with the exorcist, could perform the most surprizing feats: but now he has lost sight of them again; and has made a new discovery, that, notwithstanding all the power and pains of the exorcists, no perfect cure was ever effected. Which assertion, as it is destitute of all manner of proof, and is moreover positively contradicted by the primitive Fathers, who speak as eye-witnesses, does not deserve any answer. Only, to throw a little light on this matter, I shall observe, that in some persons the possession was more obstinate than in others, and more difficult to be removed; as may be gathered from *Minucius Felix*, in his dialogue called *Ostavius*, where speaking of evil spirits, he says, ‘they either fly out instantly, or vanish gradually, in proportion as the faith of the patient, or the grace of the agent assists towards the cure.’ We find something of the same nature to have happened to the Apostles, with regard to the dumb spirit, mentioned in the gospel of St. *Mark* [1]. Where the father says to Christ: *I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.* And after our Saviour had ejected him, they asked privately. *Why could not we cast him out? And he*

[1] C. xvi. 16,

said to them: *This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*

The remaining part of his observations relate to matters of discipline and œconomy in the primitive Church, interspersed here and there with blunders, and seasoned with slander against the Christians of old times, to enliven the discourse and make it more relishing to his infidel readers. As for instance, where he accuses the primitive Churches of keeping a number of pretended demoniacks in constant pay, always ready for the shew, tried and disciplined by their exorcists to an habit of groaning and howling, and to give proper answers to all questions which should be demanded of them. And this, he says, will account for the confidence of those challenges made to the heathens by the christian Apologists. Here again he has forgot himself. But just now he had discovered, that the whole power of the exorcists was never able to effect an absolute cure; and now he supposes, that so good a correspondence was kept up between the agents and the patients, that they might confidently challenge the heathens, and venture their cause and their lives upon the issue of the trial. But of this enough has been said already.

What he has observed relating to the Exorcists. disposition made by the council of *Lao-dicea*, about the middle of the fourth century, or as he says anno 367, is far from being favourable to his system. But he introduces it with an assertion which is manifestly false, *viz.* that the power of exorcizing demoniacks, or of casting out devils, was, till that time, in the hands only

of the meaner sort of the christian laity. Almighty God did, indeed, grant the extraordinary power of casting out devils, in the primitive ages, to many who were not appointed exorcists, nevertheless there were exorcists, at that time, who were numbered among the inferiour clericks, as they are to this day. They are expressly mentioned by the holy pope *Cornelius*, in his letter to *Fabius* bishop of *Antioch*, which *Eusebius* has preserved [1]. The same historian also relates that St. *Romanus* who suffered martyrdom anno 303. was deacon and exorcist of the Church of *Cæsarea*. But there is no need of seeking after proofs for this, the Doctor himself having told us, but nine pages before, in a marginal note, that about the middle of the third century, the exorcists began to be reckoned among the inferiour orders of the Church [2]. But it was not to his purpose to remember it in this place. Long after this, the Council of *Laodicea* can 26. ordered, *that no one should exorcize either in the Churches or private houses, but those who were promoted by the bishops*. Which order, if it was occasioned by any abuses, as he supposes it was, does but shew the vigilance of the bishops to prevent such abuses, whereas he accuses them as being not only favourers, but even authors and contrivers of them.

This is the sum of all that he has alledged, to overthrow the established belief of there being, in the Church of God, a power of casting out devils. In the prosecution of which argument, his frequent clashing with the holy scriptures, his evident shuffling and repeated contradictions, are manifest symptons of a bad cause.

[1] *Euseb.* I. vi. hist. c. 43. [2] *Inq.* p. 86.

§. 8. The

Gift of
prophecy,
visions
&c.

§ 8. The next miraculous gifts, which he considers, are those of *prophecy*, of *visions*, of *ecstasy*, and of *discovering mens hearts*. As to prophecy and ecstasy, he makes no distinction between them, and moreover confounds them with the error of *Montanus*, whom he represents as the first who gave a vogue to prophetick visions and ecstasies, in the primitive Church; forgetting I presume, that they are mentioned in the sacred scriptures. St. Peter, in his first sermon to the Jews, quotes the prophet *Joel* saying: *Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions* [1]. And he himself had an *ecstasy of mind*, at the time when *Cornelius* sent for him [2]: but he did not lose the *use of his reason*; as is evident from the apposite and rational answer that he made to the voice which said, *Arise Peter; kill and eat*: to which he replied: *Far be it from me, Lord: for I never did eat any thing that is common and unclean*. From which passage, the Doctor might have understood the nature of an *ecstasy*, better than he seems to have done, when he tells us: 'This *ecstasy* was a temporary madnes, or los of senses, and is called by *Tertullian* a spiritual virtue, in which prophecy consists' [3]. For this is a description of the mad *ecstasy* of *Montanus* and his followers, with whose error *Tertullian*, by that expression, discovers himself to have been infected.

Monta-
nists.

This *Montanus* was a native of *Mygia*, who, about the year 171, shortly after his conversion to Christianity, was so puffed up with pride and ambition, that the devil

[1] Act. ii. 17. [2] ibid. cx. [3] p. 97.

entered into him, and he became subject to violent agitations or convulsions, in which fits he lost the use of his reason, and uttered many incoherencies, which he pretended were all of them prophecies. The generality of the faithful opposed these his extravagancies: but some were deceived by him. The most noted of his followers were two women, *Prisca* or *Priscilla* and *Maximilla*, who were subject to the same agitations as their master was, and commenced false prophets after his example. They were condemned and excommunicated by the bishops of the Church: but notwithstanding that, they continued to increase their party, and drew several people over to their reformation, by their false prophecies, and affected severities; insomuch that *Tertullian* himself, who was naturally inclined to severity, was deceived by them. Though as it commonly falls out among hereticks, he afterwards forsook them, and founded a sect of his own, who were called *Tertullianists*. From hence it appears that what the Doctor has alledged out of *Tertullian*, about his *ecstatick maid* and those *mad prophecies*, is not to be regarded.

Eusebius, in his history, makes mention of one *Miltiades*, who wrote a treatise to shew that it is not the part of a prophet to speak in ecstasy, that is, *without knowing what he says, without sense or judgment* [i]. In the same place he gives us an extract out of *Asterius Urbanus*, to the same purpose, in these words. ‘ A false prophet, in an ecstasy, which is accompanied with licentiousness and impudence: he begins with wilful folly, and falls into involuntary madness of mind. They can not shew that any of the prophets, either of the

[i] L. 5. c. xvii.

‘ old or new testament, were inspired with such a spirit as this. They will not alledge *Agabus*, nor *Judas*, nor *Silas*, nor the daughters of *Philip*, nor *Ammia* of *Philadelphia*, nor *Quadratus*, nor some others who belong not to them But if, as they say, after *Quadratus* and *Ammia*, those female followes of *Montanus* have succeeded to the grace of prophecy ; let them tell us, who have succeeded to *Montanus* and the women : for, according to the Apostle, the gift of prophecy must continue in the Church, till the end comes. But they cannot produce one, though it is now the fourteenth year since the death of *Maximilla*. Upon the same principles, these hereticks were confuted by all the ancient writers, who affirmed, in opposition to their mad ecstasies, that the true prophets of God were in their sober senses, that they understood what they spoke, having a settled mind and reflection.

Hence we may gather, that what some ancient orthodox writers say, of the prophets being in ecstasy, is not to be understood of these mad ecstasies of the *Montanists*, which deprived them of the use of their reason ; but only of a divine impulse, which left them the free exercise of a settled mind.

What I have already said, is sufficient to dispel that obscurity and confusion, in which the Doctor, either designedly or through ignorance, has involved this article. By the by, it may be observed, that, whereas the *Montanists* pretended, that the gift of prophecy was to be withdrawn, after the death of *Maximilla* ; the orthodox, on the contrary, maintained that the true spirit of prophecy would never fail, till the consummation of all things. And indeed God has, in every age, in-
duced

dued some persons with this gift, and we have all imaginable grounds to hope he will never fail to favour his beloved spouse, the Church, with it, till the end of the world.

With regard to *visions* and *divine admonitions*; they are so positively attested by that learned Father and martyr St *Cyprian*, that the Doctor could find no other answer, to return to it, but this. That he was the inventor of such idle stories, and the director of those senseless visionaries, whom he did not believe, but made use of, to serve a turn, to excuse himself, or to advance his own power and episcopal authority, of which he was very fond. For which scandalous assertion, he has no other grounds, but his own rash suspicions. I shall mention one instance on which he lays the greatest stress. St. *Cyprian*, during the time of persecution, withdrew himself from the danger, alledging that the Lord had commanded him to retire. ' Yet this plea, says the Doctor, was nothing else, without doubt, but a mere fiction, contrived for the purpose of quieting the scandal that was raised by his flight; and is, in effect, confuted by himself, in another letter to the Clergy, in which he declares that it was the advice and authority of one *Tertullus*, which prevailed with him, to withdraw himself from a place where his life was so much sought for [1].

It is worth while to observe with what confidence he gives the lie to St. *Cyprian*, in this matter; when it is impossible for him to know that it was a lie. The holy martyr declares, that the Lord commanded him to retire: the Doctor

[1] *Inq.* p. 105.

says, it is mere fiction. I shall leave it to the christian reader to judge, which of the two was most likely to know, and most worthy to be believed. Neither has he given us a fair representation of what the Saint says of *Tertullus*'s advice. He does not say, it was the authority of *Tertullus*, which solely or chiefly prevailed with him to withdraw himself: but, that *Tertullus* advised him to be cautious and prudent, and not to expose himself, by appearing publickly in a place, where his life was sought for. This he assigns as a reason why he *continued in his retirement*, not judging it necessary to acquaint them in that letter, that it was the command of God which prevailed with him first to withdraw. But to make the most of it: let us suppose that *Tertullus* did advise him to fly. We cannot therefore conclude that God did not command it: because it is not at all inconsistent, that a friend should advise the same thing which God commands.

But, he thinks, he has discovered a great inconsistency in two other visions mentioned in history. One is that of St. *Dionysius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, to whom it was enjoined, by a voice from heaven, to read all heretical books, without reserve, because he was able to confute them. The other is that of St. *Jerome*, who was scourged in a vision for the grievous sin of reading *Cicero*, *Virgil* and *Horace*, though he was as able to confute them, as St. *Dionysius* had been. But who does not see, that the two cases are widely different? St. *Dionysius* made a scruple of reading heretical books, on account of their heterodoxy; but, as it was necessary that their errors should be confuted, and the faithful armed against them, and no one was better able to do this than St.

Dionysius,

Dionysius, therefore he received that command. St. Jerome, on the contrary, indulged himself too much in reading profane authors, not with any view of confuting them, but for the sake of their style and elegancies, to the mispending of his time, which might have been otherwise employed, more to the honour of God; and therefore he was reprimanded for it.

As to the gifts of prophecy, and of discovering the secrets of mens hearts; the Doctor has not brought the least shadow of an objection, against their having subsisted in the Church of God, after the death of the Apostles. For which reason, I shall say nothing about them, in this place; but, in the sequel, shall mention some instances, as they occur in history.

§. 9. Under the article on the gift of expounding the scriptures and the mysteries of God, he has nothing but what has been considered before, under St. Justin and St. Irenæus. Only, that he concludes it with an account of a cheat, which was attempted and discovered in the reign of king Henry VIII, under the name of the *holy maid of Kent*. Which is just as much to the purpose, as if he had introduced the *counterfeit spirit in the wall*, in the reign of queen Mary; a trick contrived by the reformers, to blow up the fire of sedition, and to enrage the populace against the catholick faith. See *Stow's annals*.

After this, he comes to the gift of tongues; on which article he is so confident of success, that he speaks in this decisive manner. 'I might risk the merit of my argument on this single point; that, after the Apostolick times, there is not, in all history, one instance, either well attested, or even so much as mentioned,

‘ of any particular person who had ever exercised this gift, or pretended to exercise it, in any age or country whatsoever’ [1]. I have nothing more to do then but to refer him to the lives of St. *Pachomius*, St. *Dominick*, St. *Vincent Ferrerius* and St. *Francis Xavier*, where it may be found both mentioned and attested; and the controversy will be at an end. That it is mentioned, is past all dispute; whether the attestations be convincing or not, is no ways necessary to inquire in this place; for upon the bare mention of it, he risks the merit of his argument. By which he has betrayed a most confident ignorance in point of history.

St. *Irenæus* expressly says, that in his time, they heard the brethren speak with divers tongues. To which the Doctor replies, that it is very remarkable, that this primitive bishop, who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himself. For which he produces Dr. *Cave* as his voucher, who speaks of the great trouble and pains the holy martyr was at, to learn the barbarous dialect of the *Celtick Gauls*, before he could do any good among them.

But, in the first place, what is it to the purpose, though we were to allow, that St. *Irenæus* wanted the gift of tongues? The same gifts were not granted to all; to some one, to some another; to each, according to the will of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, the passage which he quotes, after Dr. *Cave*, does not necessarily convey that meaning which they have given to it. St. *Irenæus*’s words are, in the preface to his first book, ‘ you will not expect from us, who re-

side among the *Celtick Gauls*, and are for the most part employed in a barbarous dialect, a discourse artfully composed, which is what 'we have not learned' (k). From which words, all that may fairly be concluded is, that St. *Irenæus* chiefly made use of the *Celtick* language; but no way that he disowned the gift of tongues.

Thus I have gone through the chief remarks, which *Middleton* has made, on the miraculous gifts which subsisted in the primitive Church. Let the impartial reader judge, whether he has made out, in any tolerable manner, that heavy and scandalous charge which he brought against all the Fathers, of being either credulous tools, or designing knaves and impostors. Upon the success of this depends the whole credit of the reformation. If the primitive fathers were but men of common sense and strict probity, then the protestant religion must be undone, and the Church of *Rome* must prevail, in the judgment of this protestant Doctor.

Whether his labours are likely to be of any great service to the protestant cause, I know not: This I know that they tend directly to subvert the authority of the holy scriptures, and give us a very disadvantageous idea of the propagation of the christian religion; which, if what he has said be true, must have been effected by the force of cheat and imposture: and all such as were brought over to it, must have been blind fools, indeed, who could not see that they were drawn in by juggling knaves, when the fraud was so evident that

(k) Iren. 'Οὐκ ἐπιχείρησες δὲ παρ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐν Κελσοῖς διατριβόλων καὶ περὶ βορβαλὸν διάλειχον τὸ πλεῖστον αὐχελομάνιν, λόγων τέχνην τὴν ἐκ ἴμαθομενού Ξε.

Middleton could descry it at the distance of sixteen hundred years.

But, in particular, it is remarkable, that he has taken great pains, or pleasure, in collecting the most scurrilous invectives which were uttered by the heathens, against those who believed in Christ: and this, not with any view to excite compassion for the hardships they underwent, but purposely to instil into his readers, a mean opinion of them, and to set them off in the most contemptible light. The names which were given them, as he tells us, were *despicable, stubborn, wicked enthusiasts, possessed with an abominable superstition: a stupid, credulous, impious set: the scum of mankind, enemies of the gods, emperors, laws, and customs, and even of nature itself. A senseless stupid race of blockheads and brutes, to whose impieties, all the calamities, which afflicted the several countries where they lived, were constantly imputed* In these colours the professors of christianity were represented in primitive times. But then it must be remembered, that the picture was drawn by their most inveterate enemies; whose pencils being guided by infidelity, rage and malice, were very unlikely to produce a resemblance of the original. But who could expect to see a Christian, one that pretended to be a minister of Christ, copying after such masters? There is room to suspect that he, who, upon the credit of such guides as *Lucian, Celsus and Porphyry* were, would give so coarse a colouring to the purest ages of the christian Church, was very indifferent about christianity itself.

However for the comfort of all such as formerly were, or now are, or hereafter shall be oppressed by the calumnies of their adversaries; let

let it be remembered, that Christ foretold to his followers, that they were to expect such usage. He himself was called an *impostor* and a *seducer*, and such names have been given, in every age, to his faithful disciples. Slander and misrepresentation have been the constant practice of all the enemies of the Church, from the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, down to Doctor *Middleton*.



P A R T III.

In which, by a clear deduction of facts, and instances, it is proved that the miraculous powers continued to be exerted, in the Church of God, from the conversion of the ROMAN empire, down to the end of the tenth century.

§ 1.

THOUGH the testimonies which have been produced, for the continuance of miracles, during the three first centuries, are as full and convincing as any reasonable man can desire; yet, as the fourth age abounded more with celebrated writers than any had done before, we shall find, in their valuable works, which are still extant, more ample and more circumstantial accounts of the same miraculous powers being frequently exerted, during that period of time. In which accounts nothing seems to be wanting which may be necessary to satisfy even the most scrupulous inquirer. The very names of the witnesses command credit and belief: St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Austin and many others of great note are our vouchers; on their authority we depend.

They

They were oftentimes eye witnesses of the facts which they relate; and were possessed of every qualification necessary to render their evidence decisive. If we may believe Dr. Middleton himself they were equally pious, less credulous, and more judicious than any who had gone before them. ‘ If we compare, says he, the principal Fathers of the fourth, with those of the earlier ages; we shall observe the same characters of zeal and piety in them all; but more learning, more judgment, and less credulity in the later Fathers.’ [1].

These illustrious men are the witnesses whom we produce; and if the same credit may be given to their attestations, as is due to the word of every man of sense and probity, the whole controversy will soon be at an end. This will be made appear, to a demonstration, by the few passages which I shall select out of their writings.

St. Athanasius, bishop of *Alexandria*, for the instruction of the faithful, wrote the life of St. *Antony* the hermit, in the preface to which he says. ‘ The facts, which I have inserted, are partly from my own knowledge, for I often went to see him, and partly from the information of one who had long attended on him: in all which I have carefully adhered to truth [2].’ In the course of the history are mentioned several miraculous gifts, with which this holy hermit was favoured; as divine illuminations, prophecy, healing of the sick by prayer, and casting out devils. ‘ It happened, says St. Athanasius, as he was going out of *Alexandria*, and we were

[1] Intr. lxxv.

[2] Praef. ad vit. Ant.

‘ in company with him, that a certain woman
 ‘ called after us, saying: Stay, O man of God,
 ‘ my daughter is cruelly troubled by a devil.
 ‘ Hearing this, and being also requested by us,
 ‘ the good old man willingly stopped: and hav-
 ‘ ing first offered up a prayer, in silence, to our
 ‘ Lord *Jesus*, he threatened the unclean spirit,
 ‘ which immediately went out of the young
 ‘ woman, and she was restored, to the great
 ‘ joy of the mother, and admiration of the
 ‘ people [1].’

On another occasion, in a conference which he had with certain pagan philosophers, he proved to them the truth of the christian religion, in this manner: ‘ We call upon him who
 ‘ was crucified, and all the devils, whom you
 ‘ adore as gods, tremble, and are ejected out of
 ‘ the bodies which they posses, as soon as the
 ‘ sign of the cross is made. Behold here are
 ‘ some present, who are tormented by demons:
 ‘ try now to drive away, if you can, your own
 ‘ gods, by your magick and charms: if you
 ‘ cannot do it, own yourselves conquered, and
 ‘ have recourse to the cross of Christ. Having
 ‘ said this, he called upon the name of *Jesus*,
 ‘ and made the sign of the cross thrice on their
 ‘ foreheads; upon which the demons were cast
 ‘ out, and the wisdom of the philosophers con-
 ‘ founded. Then addressing himself to them,
 ‘ he said: Think not that I have restored these
 ‘ persons. Christ works these miracles by his ser-
 ‘ vants. Believe, and you shall see that it is a
 ‘ sincere faith in God, and not the pride of elo-
 ‘ quence, which merits these wonders, [2].’

[1] *Ant. vita c. xlivi.*[2] *c. xlvi.*

In the life of this Saint, there are also related many personal conflicts, which he sustained with the devils and powers of hell, who assaulted him in every shape, and exerted every art, to render that perfect state of life, which he had embraced, uneasy and irksome to him. These the Doctor calls *monstrous stories*, and tells his reader that miracles of this stamp are too trifling to deserve any regard [1].

But why so? If they are true, it is evident that they deserve regard: and, that they are true, we are assured by the great St. *Athanasius*, who was intimately acquainted with the blessed hermit, and frequently conversed with him and with his disciples, and therefore could not well fail of having a competent knowledge of the facts which he attests. Nor is there any improbability in the account which he delivers. Every one, who believes the inspired writings, must know that great is the power and rage of the devil, that he is our adversary, that he is compared to a roaring lion, and is ever seeking to devour us. Why then must it needs be *monstrous* to believe that he assaulted St. *Antony*? Is it because he put on various shapes, and tried every art to carry his point? But, that is no more than may naturally be expected, from so crafty an enemy. Art and craft are his greatest strength: these he exerted against our Redeemer himself, when he tempted him in the wilderness. With the same arms, he fights against all men, but not with the same violence; for the hand of God restrains his rage, and does not permit him to carry on his assaults, in so dreadful

[1] Inq. p. 146.

a manner, against weaker Christians, as he is sometimes suffered to do against those who are stronger and more perfect. Holy Job, St. *Antony* and some other eminent Saints afford us examples of these more violent conflicts, in which the Almighty rendered them victorious, to shew the triumphs of his grace over the powers of hell, and to make his servants worthy to receive greater rewards in heaven, in proportion to the greater labours which they had undergone in his service on earth. But I am utterly at a loss to conceive, from whence the Doctor could learn to speak of such matters with so much indifference, or rather contempt, as he does here and in other parts of his *Inquiry*. Surely, not from the scriptures, the pretended rule of his faith; for there our conflict with the prince of darkness is represented, not as an *imaginary* or *trifling* concern, but as a *real* and very dangerous war, in which is hazarded the salvation of our soul, compared to which the whole world is but a trifle.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. St. *Cyril*, bishop of *Jerusalem*, In his homily on the *Paralytick*, attests that the gifts of prophecy, of healing the sick, and of casting out devils, were granted in his days, to some of the faithful at *Jerusalem*. And that such facts were well known, may be gathered from his exhorting them, as he does in that discourse, to be humble, and to repress all thoughts of pride and vain glory which might arise in their breasts, on occasion of those extraordinary graces. For, if the faithful of *Jerusalem* had been utter strangers to the miraculous works, of which he there speaks, it is incredible that a grave and learned prelate, as he was, would have mentioned such things in a publick discourse, not only asserting that they really

really subsisted among his hearers, but also fore-warning them of the danger of pride, to which they were exposed on that account, and giving them proper advice against it.

It was while this holy man was bishop of *Jerusalem*, that a wonderful apparition of a shining cross was seen in the heavens, not only by the inhabitants of the city, but also by a multitude of strangers, who were come, according to custom, from all parts of the world, to offer up their devotions at the holy places : of which remarkable event, he wrote an account, to *Constantius*, the emperor, in a letter which is still extant. (1)

(1) I am not ignorant that such appearances as these, are supposed, by the philosophers of our days, to be no more than meteorick lights in the sky, not unfrequently seen in solar and lunar halos. For which reason, I do not absolutely insist on the miraculousness of this appearance at Jerusalem. But I thought it worth while to mention it, not only because it is a signal event recorded in history ; but also, because it is above the reach of natural philosophy, to determine to any degree of certainty whether *this particular* phænomenon was a natural event, or not. It is true, such effects may and do arise from a particular concurrence of secondary causes, without any miraculous interposition. But it does not therefore follow, that they never happen otherwise. What is, at one time, the mere result of natural causes, may at another time be a miracle, viz. when the hand of God directs natural causes to work a certain effect, which, at that time, they would not have done, without his extraordinary interposition. So, an earthquake may be, at one time, *natural*, and at another, *supernatural*, as Mr. *Warburton* has proved in his *Julian*. So again eclipses happen naturally by the regular course of the planets : yet, that which accompanied our Saviour's crucifixion, was supernatural. The same may be said of lights in the sky : frequently they are no more than natural effects ; but on some special occasions they may have been and may be supernatural. For these reasons I relate the fact, as it is delivered down to us by the Ancients ; but yet without pretending to determine any thing as to the miraculousness of it : because I have not found that history affords light enough for such a determination.

But

Julian's
attempt to
rebuild the
temple.

But one of the most memorable occurrences in history, is the attempt of *Julian the Apostate*, to rebuild the temple of *Jerusalem*; designing by that means to falsify the prophecies of our Saviour, and to raise up, in the *Jews*, a formidable and irreconcileable enemy against the Christian religion. And indeed all human means seemed to promise success to the undertaking: the emperor supported it with his whole interest and authority, and multitudes of *Jews* flocked together, from all parts, to contribute their riches and their labours to the work. But *St. Cyril* encouraged his flock, with strong assurances of the divine protection, telling them that this vain attempt would come to nothing; that the promises of Christ were infallible; that as he had declared the temple should never be rebuilt, so they might rest secure in his stedfast word. The event was answerable to these assurances. No sooner was the work begun, but the hand of God visibly opposed it. The foundations were overthrown by dreadful hurricanes and earthquakes: the workmen were driven away by fire which burst forth from the earth: a shining cross appeared in the air, and the figure of a cross was imprinted on the garments of Christians *Jews* and *Pagans* who were present; *St. Gregory Naz*: in his fourth discourse against *Julian*, appeals to such as had been spectators of this miracle, who shewed their garments, in his time, still bearing that mark of a cross upon them. Even a cotemporary pagan writer, *Ammianus Marcellinus* in l. 23, speaking of this attempt of *Julian*, says: 'When the work was begun with great ardour and resolution, frightful balls of fire frequently burst forth near the foundations,

tions, and having several times burned the workmen, rendered the place inaccessible. So, the enterprize was given over, by reason of the element's fighting against it with determined obstinacy.' Thus the pagan.

Not long after this, Julian was slain in his *Persian* expedition ; which event was foretold, by visions and divine revelations, to several holy men in different parts of the world, who were addressing their prayers to God, to avert the calamities with which the Church was threatened by that apostate. These prayers the Doctor has turned into *curse*s, and says, they were addressed to God, by those Saints, for the destruction of the emperor [1]. For which piece of intelligence he alledges *Sozomen* as his voucher l. 6. c. 2, how justly, will best appear from that author's own words, which are as follows : ' *Didymus* the philosopher, who resided at *Alexandria*, being in great grief, as well on account of the emperor who had apostatized from the true religion, as on account of the sufferings of the Churches, had recourse to fasting and prayer. And so great was his affliction, that even when night came on, he took no nourishment. But as he sat on his couch, he was overcome with sleep ; and being, as it were, in an ecstasy, he imagined that he saw white horses passing to and fro through the air, and heard their riders say aloud : Tell *Didymus*, that this very day and hour *Julian* is cut off : and let him acquaint *Athanasius* the bishop with it ; and rise and eat.' So far *Sozomen* l. 6. c. 2. The

Julian's death.

Scandalous aspersions.

[1] *Inq.* p. 156.

Doctor, by referring us to this passage, to prove that the Saints prayed for the destruction of the emperor, has given the world but a bad specimen of his own sincerity, in delivering the sentiments of the primitive Christians (m). At the same time, it may be observed, that, both here and in other parts of his treatise, whenever he casts any of his false and scandalous aspersions upon them, he seldom fails of giving them, with an affected sneer, the title of *holy men*, or *Saints*, or *primitive Fathers*, or *lights of the Church*.

After this, he goes on to observe what a total change there was, both of principles and practice, between the Fathers of the fourth, and those of the preceding ages. That, whereas the Christians of the three first centuries prayed for their persecutors; on the contrary, in the fourth, their prayers were changed into curses, and the divine vengeance was confessedly implored, to destroy such of the emperors as gave them any disturbance.

It is very remarkable, that this trick of putting a change on the primitive Christians, and making them answerable for what they never said nor meant, was played off by *Julian the apostate*, much in the same manner as it is by Dr. *Middleton*. This will appear from the following story which I shall relate in the words of Mr. *Warburton*. ‘*Titus*, bishop of *Bostra*, and his clergy, ‘ in an address presented to *Julian*, acquaint him with their care ‘ in keeping the flock committed to them (then equal in number ‘ to the Pagans) in due obedience to the laws. The return *Julian* ‘ makes for this act of duty, is to acquaint the people of *Bostra* ‘ that their bishop was become their delator, that he had repre- ‘ sented them as prone to sedition, and even capable of the last ‘ excesses, but that he and his clergy kept them in order. For ‘ this crime therefore, which he calls the taking to himself the ‘ merit of the people’s good behaviour, he advises them to expel ‘ the bishop from their city.’ *Jul. Ep*, 52. It is very odd, that the primitive bishops of the Church are treated in the same manner by a christian Doctor, and by a persecuting pagan emperor.

So true it is, says he, what all the popish writers have not scrupled to affirm, from Pope *Gregory the Great* down to Cardinal *Bellarmino*, that it was not the want of will, but of the power onely to rebel, which made the primitive Christians so patient under the persecuting emperors.' [1]

It is no easy matter to find out what he means, or how to reconcile him with himself, in this observation. In his *introduction*, he had told us, that the Fathers of the fourth century were, for zeal and piety no ways inferiour, and for learning and judgment even superiour to those of the earlier ages: so that it is manifest, what change there was, if any, must have been for the better. But now he would fain persuade us, that, their *principles* and *practice* were strangely altered for the worse. And what is still more surprizing, before he reaches the end of the same period, he assures us, there was no change at all in their *principles*, but only in the article of *power*: and, that the Christians of the three first ages would not have been more patient under persecution, than those of the fourth, only that they had not acquired strength enough to controul their enemies.

To throw a little light on this matter; it may be observed, that he first raises a phantom of his own brain, and then, like a true *Quixot*, plunges himself into numberless difficulties, in fighting against it. That the primitive Christians cursed their persecutors, and confessedly implored the divine vengeance to destroy them, is a phantom of his own raising, for which there is not the least foundation either in their *practice* or *principles*.

[1] *Inq.* p. 157.

It is true, they prayed that God would deliver them from persecution, and save them from the hands of their enemies: but, I cannot suspect that any one will construe such a *prayer* into a *curse*, no more than that petition which, in the book of *common prayer*, is addressed to God, that he would *abate the pride of our enemies, assuage their malice and confound their devices*. By the gospel-law we are bound to pray for our enemies: but, by the same law, we are allowed to pray for a deliverance from their wicked designs and all other calamities of this life. This is what the primitive Christians practised. But to accuse them of hating and cursing, and imploring vengeance on their enemies, in any other sense than by praying to be defended from them, is a most groundless calumny, contradicted by the whole tenour of their lives and doctrine.

As to what he says of *all* popish writers affirming, that it was not the want of will, but of power only to rebel, which made the primitive Christians so patient under persecution; he ought, if he had been disposed to deal fairly, to have referred us to *some at least* of the most eminent catholic writers, who mention this as the general opinion of *all the rest*. For it is very weak and silly, in such an assertion, concerning the sentiments of all Catholicks, to alledge, as he has done, no better authority than that of *Chillingworth*, a declared enemy.

Then, with regard to the charge itself, which he brings against the primitive Christians, that they *would* have rebelled, as he calls it, if their power had been equal to their inclinations: I believe it is more than he, or a craftier one than ever he was, can tell, what they *would* have done

done, had they been in different circumstances. This I am sure of, that the genuin narratives of their sufferings represent them as actuated by nobler motives, and endued with such patience as must have been the effect of God's grace, and not the mere result of compulsion and want of power.

I could wish he had been a little more explicit, in declaring his own sentiments on this head: Whether, it would have been criminal, in the primitive Christians, to have resisted their persecutors, or not. If he thought there would have been no crime in such resistance, why does he reproach them in this manner? But, if all such resistance be, in his opinion, a *criminal rebellion*; then he must have admitted, as a necessary consequence, that it never can be lawful to resist a tyrant, who shamefully abuses his power to the destruction of his people; but, that passive obedience and non-resistance, in the most extensive meaning of the words, even when estate, life, liberty and religion are attacked, are essential duties which may not be violated without the sin of rebellion. Which, if it was his opinion in theory, I have good reason to suspect he never would have reduced to practice, had his patience been put to the test.

But be that as it may: whether it were want of will, or want of power, which prevented the primitive Christians from resisting their oppressors: this is certain, that it does not follow from thence, that their prayers must needs have been changed into curses; which is the main point the Doctor is labouring to prove. Even in supposition that they had broke out into actual resistance, still they might have complied with that gospel injunction. *I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate*

hate you : and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you [1]. I do not imagine that the Doctor would have made any difficulty of allowing this to be true : for he could hardly be so far overseen as to suppose, that all resistance against a tyrant, must of necessity be attended with so notorious a breach of the gospel law.

St. Ephrem. § 2. St. Ephrem, deacon of *Edessa* in *Syria*, in a treatise written by him, which is called his *confession*, makes mention of several heavenly visions with which he himself was favoured. And in his *Encomium* on all the Saints, he speaks in this manner : ‘ Though they are dead, they perform great works, as if they were alive, they heal the sick, they drive out devils, and put to flight all their wicked tyranny, by the power of Christ. For the grace of the holy Ghost is always present to their holy reliques, and works all miracles in them ’.

St. Basil the Great, bishop of *Cæsarea* the Great, in *Cappadocia* ; by his prayers, restored to health *Valentinian*, son of *Valens* the emperor, and *Modestus* a great officer of the court ; as it is related by two eminent Saints, both of them cotemporary and personally acquainted with him, viz. St. *Gregory Naz* : and St. Ephrem deacon. [1]. And in his 26th homily on St. *Mamas* martyr, he evidently supposes, that his hearers, by having recourse to the Saint’s intercession, as well in dangers by sea, as in sickness, and other distresses, had experienced his powerful protection, even to the raising of the dead to life.

Sr. Gregory Naz. St. *Gregory of Nanzianzum*, in his eleventh discourse relates as a fact pu-

blickly known and every were talked of, that his sister *Gorgomia* having been thrown out of a chariot and grievously bruiled, was healed by a miracle. And that at another time, being in a violent sickness, and her recovery despaired of, she was, on a sudden, restored to perfect health, while she was prostate before the altar, addressing her prayers to him who is worshipped upon it. And in his 19th discourse, he attests that his father, being at the point of death on easter-eve, was restored to health by a miracle, insomuch that he offered up the sacrifice in the Church on easter-day.

St. *Ambrose*, bishop of *Milan*, was St. *Ambrose*. himself occasionally favoured with the extraordinary gift of prophecy and divine revelations, as appears from the history of his life. And St. *Paulinus* bishop of *Nola* relates of him, that when, upon the conviction of a certain offender, he was pronouncing the sentence of excommunication against him; in the very instant of delivering him over to *Satan*, and while the words were yet in his mouth, the devil began to seize and tear him as his own, to the great amazement and wonder of St. *Paulinus* himself and of the rest who were present [1].

By his firmness in maintaining the catholick faith against the *Arians*, he drew upon himself the indignation of the empress *Justina* who was a favourer of those hereticks. Her attachment to that party, and the instigations of the ringleaders of it, made her resolve to destroy him: but he was miraculously preserved by a superior power. An assassin, sent on purpose to murder him, had no sooner lifted up his hand to give the blow, but he

[1] *Paulin.* poem. 17.

became motionless, and continued so till he had confessed his wicked intentions; after which he was restored to his former condition. See *Pau-*
linus N^o. 20 in his life of St. *Ambrose*.

About the same time, almighty God revealed to him, in a vision, the place where the bodies of two holy martyrs, *Gervasius* and *Protasius*, lay: which being taken up and translated to the Church with due honour, several persons were delivered from unclean spirits, which had possessed them; also a certain citizen, who was well known to the whole city, and had been blind for many years, asking the occasion of that joy among the people, and being informed that it was on account of the translation of the holy martyrs reliques, begged most earnestly that he might be conducted to them; which being done, he laid his handkerchief on the bier, upon which the reliques were carried, and then applied it to his eyes, by which means he recovered his sight the same instant. This fact is related not only by St. *Ambrose*, but also by St. *Austin*, who was actually at *Milan* when it happened. See his *confessions* l. 9. c. 7.

The influence, which these miracles had on the minds of the people, was a great obstacle to the progres of the *Arian* faction: therefore they left no stone unturned, to make it believed that there was some cheat in the affair. Every thing was done to discredit them that could be done, as well by the lies and misrepresentations of the hereticks, as by the interest and power of the court, then residing in that city. But all to no purpose: the people knew what they had seen with their own eyes; the man, who had been blind, was a standing evidence, and the notoriety

riety of the fact prevailed over all their contrivances. The credit of the miracles was more firmly established by this canvassing and opposition ; and, in spite of all the rage of the empress and her party, gave a check to the persecution, which had been raised against the Catholicks. Whoever is desirous of seeing this matter more fully handled, may find it in a discourse of St. Ambrose's on this occasion, and in his second letter to his sister *Marcellina*.

St. John Chrysostom bishop of Constantinople, in his 13th panegyrick on St. *Domnina* and her two daughters *Bernice* and *Prosope* martyrs, attests that frequent miracles were wrought at their reliques, and earnestly exhorts his hearers to intreat those blessed saints to be their patrons. To the same purpose he speaks in his discourse on St. *Babylas* martyr. And hom: 32. T. 7. he mentions it, as a thing well known, that many had been healed of their distempers, by anointing themselves with oil taken from the lamps, which were kept burning before the reliques of the martyrs. And on the sign of the cross, he says : ' This sign, both in the days of our forefathers and in our own, has thrown open gates that were shut, destroyed the effects of poisonous drugs, dissolved the force of hemlock, and cured the bites of venomous beasts' [1].

And St. *Nilus*, a grave cotemporary writer, speaking of St. Chrysostom in the 294th epistle of his 2d. book, says : ' That wonderful man, John, used to see the Church filled with Angels, especially at the time of the most holy and

[1] T. 7. p. 552.

‘ unbloody

‘ unbloody sacrifice ; as he related privately to some of his most intimate friends. He said, that as soon as the priest hath begun the sacred oblation , many of the blessed powers come down from heaven, and standing about the altar in rich garments, with bare feet and their eyes cast down, attend with respect and awful silence, till the finishing of the tremendous mystery : and then they spread themselves all over the Church, and minister to the bishops and priests and deacons , who distribute the body and venerable blood to the rest’. St. Chrysostom , in his 6th. book on *Priesthood* , relates a like vision, granted to a certain elderly man of admirable virtue.

Let the impartial reader judge, whether these expressions of distributing the *body and venerable blood* ; of *most holy and unbloody sacrifice* ; of *tremendous mystery* , are not wholly conformable to the belief of Catholicks , and contrary to that of Protestants. The matter appeared so evident to Middleton , that, after having recited two or three such expressions, from St. Cyprian , St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome , he concludes in this manner : ‘ What is all this, but a description of *that sacrifice of the mass* , which the Romanists offer at this day, both for the living and the dead ; and the same miraculous tales which they still relate, of their *transubstantiated bread* ?’ Thus the Doctor [1]. By which he fairly acknowledges a full agreement between the catholick Church of this time, and that of primitive antiquity, in these most important articles ; with this subsidiary proof to evince the truth of such

articles, that they are supported by miracles as credible as the testimony of the most learned and holy men can make them.

What remains then, but either to embrace that faith, to which, besides the recommendation of antiquity, heaven bears witness by so many signs and wonders: or else to reject all such expressions, and to disbelieve such visions and revelations, without any other reason for so doing, but barely because they tend to confirm the catholick cause? The latter is what the Doctor seems to proceed upon, as a settled point. Wherever he can discover popery, there needs no other confutation: the whole question is resolved and decided in these few words; *what is all this, but popery?* A strange method of searching after truth, which instead of bringing us nearer, must be always leading us farther from it. For when facts, which are related by grave authors of competent knowledge and veracity, are denied and rejected, for no other reason but because they clash with certain favourite opinions, it is evident, that prejudice and passion, and not the love of truth are set up as guides; which can have no other consequence but to confirm a person in his errors, and render him incurably blind.

Palladius bishop of *Helenopolis* in *Bythinia*, in Palladius his lives of the fathers of the desart, relates the following story of himself [1]. That he went a journey of eighteen days to visit St. *John of Lycopolis*, to whom he was an utter stranger, and that while he was in conversation with the holy man, *Alypius* the governour of the country came thither; upon which he retired, to leave the

[1] Hist. Laus. c. 43.

Saint and the governour at liberty to converse together. ‘ But finding, says *Palladius* of himself, that he stayed a long time with him, I began to be impatient, and murmured against him, thinking that he slighted me, and shewed too much respect for *Alypius*; insomuch that I had it in my mind to slight him in requital, and go away. But he called his interpreter and said to him: Go tell that brother, that he be not displeased, I will dismiss the governour speedily, and speak to him When the governour was gone, he said to me: Why was you displeased with me? What cause of offence did you see, that you should harbour those things in your mind which neither become me nor you? . . . It would have been wrong in me to have left him for the sake of conversing with you. He is oppressed with worldly cares and dangers, and having got a little leisure time came to provide for his own spiritual welfare. But you have no other business on your hands, but that of saving your soul Then speaking to me chearfully, he said. You have many afflictions, and have suffered much about leaving the desart. The devil tempts you with specious pretences and reasons: he hath suggested to you the longing affection of your father, and that you might induce your brother and sister to embrace the monastick state. But behold I tell you good news: they are both safe: they have renounced the world: and your father will live seven years longer. Think then no more of returning into your own country, on their account. I was comforted with these words, and gave God thanks, as understanding now that the pretences, with which

which I had been tempted, were removed. After that he said to me. Do you desire to be made a bishop The time will come when you shall be chosen bishop'. This prediction of the holy man was verified some years after, when *Palladius* was in *Bythinia*, having been obliged to leave the desert for the recovery of his health, as he relates in the same place.

After this, he mentions another conference between this holy hermit and some monks from *Jerusalem*, from whom he had the following particulars. 'He received us with a cheerful countenance: and when we entreated him to pray for us, as is the custom among the fathers of *Egypt*, he asked whether any of us were in holy orders: we all answered, No: now there was indeed one of us who had been ordained deacon; which was known but to one of the company, who had promised secrecy: for he was willing to conceal it, thinking himself scarce worthy of the name of a Christian, much less of any superior dignity, in comparison of such holy men. But the Saint pointing to him said: This man is a deacon. And when he persisted in denying it; he took his hand and kissed it, saying: My son, make not void the grace of God; deny not the gift of God, by telling an untruth. A lie is contrary to the profession of a Christian, and can never be commendable, let the matter be great or small, since our Saviour says: *A lie is from the evil one.* Thus was he discovered, and received this fartherly rebuke. After prayer was ended, one of our company, who was much afflicted with a tertian ague, begged to be healed. The holy hermit told him, that affliction was

for

for his greater good ; nevertheless he gave him some oil wherewith to anoint himself : and no sooner had he anointed himself with it, but he cast up the morbifick matter, and was perfectly freed from his illness. . . . When he had given us his blessing, he bid us go in peace, uttering this prophecy at the same time. This very day, said he, an account is brought to *Alexandria*, of a victory gained by *Theodosius* over the tyrant *Eugenius* : but the emperor will not long survive it, he will die a natural death.' The event was agreeable to his prediction [1].

The same author relates many other miracles, which were wrought by the fathers of the desarts, not only from the report of credible witnesses, but from his own certain knowledge ; declaring that he had seen these wonderful works himself ; and though they may seem incredible to such as are hard of belief, yet he assures us, that, by the grace of God, he tells the truth.

St. Je- § 3. St. *Jerome*, priest, a man of great sanctity and profound erudition, in his life of St. *Hilarion*, among several miracles wrought by that holy hermit, mentions the following : ' At the time of the great earthquake which happened after the death of *Julian*, the sea passed its bounds and seemed to threaten another deluge : The people of *Epidaurus* seeing the raging waves, and mountains of water rolling on the coast, and being apprehensive lest the town should be utterly destroyed, went to *Hilarion* and conducted him to the shore, for their defence. There he marked out three crosses in the sand, and stretched forth his hands towards the sea ; when behold the

[1] *Hist. Lauf.* c. 46.

waters,

‘ waters, which were risen to a great height, stood before him, and after raging for a considerable time and striving, as it were, against some obstacle, returned back to their place. This fact is much talked of among the people of *Epidaurus*, and all that country, to this day; and the mothers teach it their children, that they may deliver it down to posterity.’

The same St. *Jerome*, writing against *Vigilantius*, who denied that any veneration controversy was due to the reliques of the martyrs, al- with *Vigilantius*. ledges in confutation of that false tenet, not only the practice of the whole Church to the contrary, but likewise the evident miracles, which were wrought at the tombs of the Saints. ‘ This man, says he, disputes against the wonders and miracles which are done at the shrines of the martyrs, and says they are of no advantage to believers, but only to unbelievers: as if the question were, for whose sake they are done, and not, by what power they are done. . . . Answer me, how comes it to pass, that in this vile dust and ashes, as you call them, of the martyrs, there is so great a manifestation of signs and miracles.’ Let me here ask: Why did not *Vigilantius* point out the imposture of these miracles, and expose them to the publick view of the world? If the Christians of those times had effected such portentous works, by art and contrivance alone, surely he might, one way or other, have come at the secret, and would infallibly have made it publick. It was his interest so to do. Such a discovery would have brought that part of the controversy to a short issue. But so far was he from making any such discovery, that, we find he employed

ployed nothing but wretched sophistry against plain facts.

Now that I have mentioned this question, about the veneration due to the reliques of the Saints, I cannot forbear observing, that Dr. Middleton makes a remark or two upon it, which, though very just, are not very honourable to the protestant cause. The first is, that *Vigilantius* writes just as a Protestant would now write [1]. The other is, that St. *Jerome* answers him in the same manner as Catholicks answer Protestants at this day [2]. From whence we may infer, that the doctrine which is taught by the catholick Church at present, is the same as was professed and maintained by that learned and orthodox priest St. *Jerome*: and that the doctrine of *Vigilantius*, which was universally condemned and rejected by the Church in that early age, is the very same which Protestants profess at this day.

Middle-
ton's ca-
vils against
S. Jerome. But, in order to invalidate the testimony of this judicious and venerable Father, the Doctor assures us first, that as for all 'the most eminent lights of the fourth century, all of them sainted by the catholick Church, and highly reverenced at this day in all Churches, for their piety, probity, and learning; it is evident that they would not scruple, to propagate any fiction, how gross soever, which served to promote the interest either of Christianity in general, or of any particular rite or doctrine which they were desirous to recommend.' After which he adds: 'St. *Jerome* in effect confesses it; for after the mention of a silly story, concerning the Christians of *Jerusalem*,

[1] *Introd.* lxi.

[1] *Postsc.* cxxxvi.

‘ who

‘ who used to shew in the ruins of the temple, certain stones of reddish colour, which they pretended to have been stained by the blood of *Zacharias* the son of *Barachias*, who was slain between the temple and the altar, he adds: *But I do not find fault with an error which flows from an hatred of the Jews, and a pious zeal for the christian faith.*’ [1]

That the primitive Fathers, in general, were very zealous for the propagation of Christianity, is past all dispute: but this zeal was according to knowledge: they were thoroughly acquainted with the holy maxims and injunctions of that religion, which they sought to propagate. Now one of its maxims is, to detest all falsehood, as displeasing to God: How then can it be imagined, that their zeal for the interest of Christianity should make them ready to propagate, without the least scruple, any known fiction, how gross soever? Because they were earnest in promoting a spirit of simplicity, and a sincere love of truth, must we therefore conclude, that they would stick at nothing, but abuse the most sacred truths, and openly assert and maintain the most notorious forgeries, for the carrying on of their cause? Their cause was the cause of truth: they believed, and professed, and were labouring to convince others, that to deviate from the known truth is an offence against the Almighty, which he will punish severely. And therefore we ought rather to conclude, that they would not have propagated a known fiction, for any consideration whatever. Yet, we are confidently told, *it is evident that they would not scruple to do it.* Where is the evidence of it? By what new lights

has the Doctor made that *evident*, which no one ever suspected before, though their writings and their lives have been as well known, for many ages, as they are at present? Three words of St. Jerome *non condemnamus errorem* are, to be sure, sufficient to condemn them all. In this Saint's opinion, that mistake about the colour of the stones, did not deserve any *severe censure*, in as much as it did not manifest any bad disposition of heart. But does he endeavour to maintain or propagate it? Far from it, he expressly calls it *an error*. This is the great evidence, against all the most eminent men of the fourth century, to prove that they would not scruple to propagate any fiction, how gross soever.

Another objection, which he brings against this Father, is thus set off in a marginal note. 'N.B.
* The same Jerom speaking of the different manner which writers found themselves obliged to use, in their controversial and dogmatical writings, intimates that in controversy, whose end was victory rather than truth, it was allowable to employ every artifice which would best serve to conquer an adversary: in proof of which, ORIGEN, says he, METHODIUS, EUSEBIUS, APOLLINARIS, have written many thousands of lines against CELSUS and PORPHYRY; consider with what arguments, and what slippery problems, they baffle what was contrived against them by the spirit of the devil: and because they are sometimes forced to speak; they speak not what they think, but what is necessary against those who are called Gentiles'. Thus St Jerome in his apology to *Pammachius* in defence of his own writings against *Jovinian*.

This *Jovinian* had broached some heterodox opinions; one of which was, that the marriage-state

state is of equal merit, in the sight of God, with that of virginity. St. Jerome wrote a treatise to confute him; against which some, who were privately favourers of *Jovinian*, made a great outcry, taxing the Saint with having detracted from the lawful commendations of the marriage-state. In answer to these criminations, he published his apology to *Pammachius*, wherein he shews, that he had asserted the lawfulness of marriage, and given it its due praise. After which he adds, that even supposing he had been more sparing of his commendations of marriage, still he might very easily justify himself, because he was then confuting the arguments of his adversary, in which case he was under no manner of obligation to declare his own opinion. In the same manner as *Origen*, *Methodius* &c. in their writings against *Celsus* and *Porphyry*, had returned such answers, as were sufficient to baffle their arguments against Christianity, without declaring their own sentiments: for, besides their being cautious to conceal the sacred mysteries of our faith from the knowledge of the profane; there was no need, according to the rules of controversy, that they should say more than what might suffice to confute their adversary's objection.

Hereupon the Saint very justly distinguishes two kinds or methods of treating any matter: the one *dogmatical*, the other *controversial*: for it is one thing, as he observes, to *discuss* a point, and another to *resolve* it: it is one thing to teach a scholar, and another, to confute an adversary. In the *dogmatical* way, the greatest plainness and openness are necessary; because there the master declares and establishes his own sentiments: but the *controversial* way admits of greater latitude;

because an adversary may be confuted by a variety of arguments, and his opinions be proved erroneous, without any necessity of coming to a decisive resolution of the question. This is what St. Jerome says, he might have alledged in his own defence, even though he had not said one word in commendation of marriage, in that treatise against *Jovinian*. And this the Doctor, by his accustomed slippery trick of misconstruction, has represented as if the Father meant to justify all manner of deceitful dealing by lies and forgeries.

St. Sulpicius Severus, priest, flourished at the same time with St. Jerome, and is called, by St. Austin, a man of

great learning and wisdom: he wrote the life of St. Martin, bishop of *Tours*, in the beginning of which he says: ‘ I intreat those who shall read it, that they would believe what I say, and be persuaded that I have written nothing, but what is well attested and assured. For I had rather be silent, than tell an untruth ’.

In the 5th chapter he relates the following miracle. A certain catechumen, who was come to St. Martin in order to be instructed by him, was seized with a violent fever, and died without baptism: at which time the Saint happened to be gone to some other place. After three days, he returned to the monastery, and finding the man dead, was very much troubled at the accident. But perceiving himself strengthened, as it were, by the Holy Ghost, he commanded all the brethren to retire out of the cell, where the corpse was laid; and having shut the door, stretched himself out upon the limbs of the dead body, and prayed for some time; after which he waited, with confidence, for the effect of his prayers and the

the mercy of God. When behold, within the space of two hours, he saw the dead man begin to move his limbs, and open his eyes. ‘ Being thus restored to life, he was baptised, and lived many years after; and was the first among us who was a proof of the miraculous gifts of St. Martin’.

And in his first letter to *Eusebius*, concerning the danger to which St. *Martin* was exposed, when the chamber, where he lay, was set on fire, he says; ‘ About midnight the fire broke out, Martin being awaked out of his sleep, and prevented by this unexpected accident and by the pressing danger, but above all, (as he said himself) by the crafty snares of the devil, did not fly to the help of prayer, so speedily as he ought to have done. For being desirous to get out of the chamber, and striving a long time against the bolt which fastened the door, he felt the fire very violent about him, insomuch that it caught hold of his garments. At last, recollecting himself, he took up the shield of faith and prayer, and without making any farther attempts, addressed himself to the Lord, in the midst of the flames. And then, by the divine power, the flames retired from him and kept off like an arch all around him. The monks who were without, hearing the noise of the fire, broke open the bolted door; and making their way to the holy man, brought him out from the midst of it, when it was thought he had been entirely consumed. Now, as the Lord is witness to my words, he himself told me, that, as long as he strove in that perplexity to break open the door, so long the flames raged against him: but, that as soon as he had recourse to the sign

‘ of the cross and to prayer, they gave way all around him, and he felt them refreshing like dew, whereas before he had felt them burning hot’.

And in his second dialogue c. 5. speaking in the person of *Gallus* a disciple of St. *Martin*, he says, ‘ I often took notice, O *Sulpicius*, that *Martin* used to tell you, that he was not endued with so great a power of miracles, after he was bishop, as he remembered he had been before. . . . Before he was made bishop, he raised two dead persons to life, as is related at large in your book, whereas after that, he raised but one: to the truth of which fact I can bear witness; if you think my testimony any thing worth. I will relate to you how it happened. On some occasion or other, we were going to the town of *Chartres*. On the road, as we were passing by a well peopled village, a great multitude came out to meet us, all pagans; for none of that village believed in Christ. But, the fame of so great a man, as *Martin* was, had drawn together this concourse. The holy man perceiving that this was a time for acting, and being moved in spirit, began to preach the word of God to them, with more than human power. . . . In the mean time a certain woman, whose child had a little before departed this life, came, and held out the dead body in her hands; before the blessed man, saying: We know that thou art a friend of God, restore to me my child, for he is my only one: the whole multitude joined with her in the same request. Upon this the Saint, feeling himself enabled, as he told us afterwards, to work a miracle for the conversion of these people, took the dead body

body in his hands, and kneeling down in the presence of all, made his prayer, and then rising up, restored to the mother her child alive. At the sight of this, the whole multitude, with great acclamations, began to confess the name of Christ, and falling down before the blessed man, begged that he would make them Christians.

And in the third dialogue c. 2. he relates that a dumb girl of twelve years old, who had never spoken at all, was perfectly cured by St. Martin putting a little blessed oil into her mouth, after he had prayed for her. For the truth of which he appeals to *Evagrius*, who was present when this miracle was wrought. I need not mention many other wonderful works, done by the same Saint, which *Sulpicius* attests of his own knowledge, or supports by the evidence of unexceptionable living witnesses, to whom the incredulous might have recourse for farther satisfaction. What is already mentioned may suffice to convince any reasonable person: especially as this author, whose sincere piety, veracity and judgment are well known, declares c. 5. that he should esteem it a crime to tell a lie in favour of St. *Martin*; and calls Christ to witness, that he has related nothing but what he had either seen himself, or received from known witnesses, and for the most part from St. *Martin* himself.

But since the chief lights of the primitive Church of Christ, especially those who embraced the monastick state, are represented by the Doctor, sometimes as the weakest and most credulous of men, who greedily swallowed down every fable which they heard; at other times, as the most wicked and artful impostors, who propagated

gated their own gross fictions, without any manner of scruple, and, for the sake of advancing their own cause, imposed them on the world for certain truths : to obviate this gross misrepresentation, I shall extract another passage or two out of *Sulpicius* his life of St. *Martin* by which it will appear that the monks were not so ready to admit every tale, nor so wicked to suffer impostors to obtrude their fictitious miracles upon the faithful.

‘ There was a place, says *Sulpicius* c. 8. near the monastery, which through a mistake of the people, was reputed holy, as if some martyrs had been buried there : and some former bishops had even erected an altar on it. But *Martin*, who did not rashly give credit to uncertain reports, inquired of the oldest among the priests and clergy, whether they knew the name of the martyr, and the time when he suffered : that, for his part, he had a very great scruple about it, since there was no constant tradition to clear up the matter. Therefore he refrained, for some time, from going to the place, neither condemning the religious practice, so long as he was uncertain ; nor yet countenancing the vulgar opinion by his authority, lest superstition should gather strength. But on a certain day, taking with him some few brethren, he went to the place, and standing upon the sepulchre prayed to the Lord, that he would make known who and what sort of man he was who lay there entered. Then turning to the left, he saw, near at hand, a sordid frightful spectre ; which he commanded to declare his name and merit. He told his name, and confessed that he had been a robber, and was put

‘ put to death for his crimes, that his reputation
‘ was owing to a mistake of the vulgar, that
‘ his lot was very different from that of the mar-
‘ tyrs, they being in glory, and he in torments.
‘ The monks who were present heard the voice
‘ of one speaking, but saw not the apparition:
‘ then *Martin* told them what he had seen, and
‘ commanded that the altar should be taken
‘ away from the place’.

The same author c. 25. relates the following story: One *Clarus*, a worthy disciple of St. *Martin*, had made himself an abode, not far from the Bishop’s monastery, where several brethren dwelt with him. ‘ To this place, there came a young man called *Anatolius*, who, under the profession of a monk, was a hypocrite, making a false shew of much humility and innocence. He lived for some while in community with the rest; but in process of time, pretended that he had conferences with Angels: and when no one would believe him, he endeavoured to obtain belief by certain signs. Nay he went so far as to declare, that Angels passed to and fro between himself and God; and now he was desirous to be esteemed a prophet. But *Clarus* could never be induced to give the least credit to him. At last, it is said, he broke out into these words. Behold this very night the Lord will give me a white garment from heaven, which I shall wear among you; and that shall be a sign that I am the power of God, who am clad with the garment of God. Great was the expectation of all after this declaration. When midnight came, the whole monastery seemed to be shook with a great noise, *Anatolius*’s cell appeared to be enlighten- ‘ ed

' ed with frequent flashes, and a noise of people
 ' stirring about, and the murmuring of many
 ' voices was heard in it. After a while, all was
 ' silent, and then he came forth; and calling
 ' one of the monks, *Sabatius* by name, shewed
 ' him the garment, with which he was clad.
 ' *Sabatius* was quite astonished and called others;
 ' among the rest came *Clarus* himself. They
 ' brought a light, and all examined the gar-
 ' ment, with great care: it was very soft, white
 ' and shining; but what it was made of they
 ' could not tell: to sight and feeling it appeared
 ' in every respect a real garment. Upon this,
 ' *Clarus* advised his monks, to have recourse to
 ' prayer, to beg that the Lord would manifest
 ' the truth to them: so they spent the remainder
 ' of the night in singing hymns and psalms.
 ' At day-break, he took *Anatolius* by the hand,
 ' to conduct him to St. *Martin*, being well as-
 ' sured that he was not to be imposed upon by
 ' the cheats of the devil. At this, the wretch
 ' began to struggle and refuse, declaring that
 ' he was forbidden to present himself before
 ' St. *Martin*. But as they were endeavouring
 ' to drag him thither by force, the garment
 ' vanished away. These two passages may suf-
 fice to shew, that St. *Martin* and his monks
 were no friends either to rash credulity, or
 wicked forgeries; but on the contrary, that they
 had a sufficient knowledge of mankind to sus-
 pect a cheat, and penetration enough to bring it
 to light, and honesty enough to oppose its pro-
 gress.

St. *Paulinus*, bishop of *Nola*, of whom
 St. *Paulinus*. *Middleton* gives the following account.
 ' He was a noble convert from Paga-
 ' ganism,

nism, and bishop of *Nola* in *Italy*, where he built a Church to St. *Felix* the martyr, with whose acts he painted it, and with whose reliques he enriched it; and has celebrated, both in prose and verse, the miracles performed by those reliques' [1]. Poem 17: The Doctor should have added, that many of those miracles were performed in the presence of the Saint, as is attested by him, poem: 23. The same holy bishop relates, poem 25 & Natal: 10. that a house being on fire, and the people having in vain attempted to extinguish the flames with water, he took a precious relique which he had, a piece of the holy cross, and with that put out the fire in an instant.

St. Austin. §. 5. St. *Austin*, bishop of *Hippo*, whose conversion was effected by a particular and extraordinary call of God, as he relates l. 8. Conf. c. 12: after which, he became one of the greatest lights of the Church, for his extensive learning, his solid piety, and his unwearyed application to the functions of his charge. *Possidius* or *Possidonus*, one of his disciples, writing his life, says: 'I know, that, both while he was priest only, and after he was made bishop, he was requested to pray for certain persons who were possessed, and that he poured forth tears and prayers to God, and that the devils departed from them. Also, that when he was sick and kept his bed, a certain person brought one sick to him, and intreated him to lay his hands on him, that he might recover: to which he answered, that if any such power had been granted to him, he would have exercised it first on himself: The man replied, that

[1] Introd. l. xxiv.

‘ he had seen a vision, and that it was said to
 ‘ him: Go to bishop *Austin*, that he may lay his
 ‘ hand on the sick person, and he shall recover.
 ‘ The Saint hearing this, presently did it; and
 ‘ immediately the Lord caused the sick man to
 ‘ depart from him perfectly cured’.

The writings of this eminent Father, which have been preserved to our days, are many, and filled with great variety of questions touching points of doctrine and practice, which are treated with no less sincerity than erudition. In his learned work of *the city of God*, written in defence of the christian religion, he handles this very question of miracles l. 22. c. 8. ‘ Even at this time, says he, miracles are wrought in the name of *Jesus*, as well by his sacraments, as by the prayers or memorials of his Saints The miracle which was done at *Milan*, in the cure of the blind man, when we were there, might well come to the knowledge of many, because the city is large, and the emperor was there at that time, and the fact was done in the presence of a vast concourse of people, who were assembled at the bodies of the martyrs *Protasius* and *Gervasius*’.

After this he goes on to relate, in the most circumstantial manner, the miraculous cure of a certain person, with whom he lived at *Carthage*, called *Innocentius*, who had been long afflicted with a grievous fistula, and was instantly healed, to the great surprize of the surgeons and all present; of which our Saint declares he was an eye-witness: *nos interfuiimus & oculis aspeximus nostris.*

Again ‘ *Hesperius*, says he, a person of good quality, who is with us, has a farm called *Zu-*
 ‘ *bedi*

• bedi in the territory of *Fussala*, where besides the
• affliction of his cattle and servants, he found
• his house was infested by evil spirits : At a
• time when I happened to be absent, he begged
• that one of our priests would go thither, to ex-
• pel them by his prayers. One went, and
• offered there the *sacrifice of the body of Christ* ;
• praying to the best of his power, that the mo-
• lestation might cease ; and through the mercy
• of God, it ceased from that time. Now, he had
• received of a friend some holy earth, brought
• from *Jerusalem*, where Christ was buried and
• rose again the third day. This earth he had
• hung up in his chamber, to secure himself
• against any mischief. But when his house
• was freed from the infestation ; he was in
• doubt what he should do with it, having it in
• such reverence, that he was unwilling to keep
• it in his chamber any longer. It happened
• that I and *Maximin* bishop of *Synica* were in
• that neighbourhood : he invited us to come to
• him, and we did so. And when he had related
• the whole matter to us, he desired that the earth
• might be buried some where, and an oratory
• made in the place ; where Christians might as-
• semble and celebrate the mysteries of God.
• We did not oppose it ; so it was done. In the
• same place, there was a country youth that had
• the palsy, who hearing of this, besought his pa-
• rents to carry him instantly to that holy place.
• Being brought thither, he prayed, and forth-
• with went away on foot in perfect health.

• I know a certain virgin of *Hippo* was im-
• mediately dispossessed of a devil, after she had
• anointed herself with some oil into which a
• priest, who was praying for her, had drop-
• some

some of his tears. I know also a bishop prayed once for a youth, whom he did not see, and the devil instantly left him.

At Hippo one Bassus a Syrian prayed at the reliques of St. Stephen, for his daughter who lay dangerously ill: he had brought with him her garment, to touch the shrine: when behold some servants, from home, came running to tell him, that she was dead. But his friends meeting with them, while he was at his prayers, forbade them to acquaint him therewith, lest he should mourn in publick. So returning to his house, were all the family were in tears, he laid the garment, which he had with him, upon his daughter, and she was restored to life. Again, the son of one Irenæus a collector here among us, died of a sicknes. The corpse was laid out, and all things made ready for the funeral; when one of his friends advised, that the body should be anointed with some of the martyr's oil. It was done, and he came to life again.

There was one miracle, continues the same Father, wrought among us, not indeed greater than those I have spoken of, but so notorious and so celebrated, that I do not think there is one of all the inhabitants of Hippo who did not see it, or hath not been informed of it; nor one that can ever forget it. There were seven brothers and three sisters, from Cæsarea of Cappadocia, persons of no mean extraction: their father being lately dead, their mother had laid her curse on them, on account of some injury done her: in consequence of which they were all, by the judgment of God, seized with a frightful trembling of their limbs. In this sad

• sad condition, being ashamed to stay in their
• own country, they wandered about, each of
• them whither they pleased, through divers
• parts of the Roman empire. Two of them,
• *Paul* and *Palladia* came hither. It was about
• fifteen days before Easter when they came: and
• they visited the Church and the shrine of the
• most glorious St. *Stephen*, every day, praying
• that God would at length be appeased and
• restore their former health. In that and in
• every other place, where they appeared,
• they drew the eyes of all upon them
• Easter came, and on the Sunday morning,
• when there was a great concourse of people,
• and the said young man was at his pray-
• ers, and had hold of the holy place where
• the shrine was, on a sudden he fell down, and
• lay like one asleep, but without that tremor
• with which he was wont to be troubled before,
• even in his sleep. The people were all astonish-
• ed, some being in fear for him, others in sorrow:
• and when some of them had a mind to raise him
• up, others opposed it, saying that they should
• wait the issue. And behold he rose up, with-
• out any trembling, for he was perfectly cured
• The Church was filled with acclamations
• and praises. They ran to bring the tidings to
• me, at the place where I was ready to come
• forth to them. While I was giving thanks to
• God, the young man came and threw himself
• at my feet. I raised him up and embraced him.
• We went forth to the people; the Church was
• full, and rang again with their acclamations.
• *Thanks be to God, Praise be to God*, was heard
• from every corner..... The man dined with
• me, and gave me an exact account of the ca-
• lamity

lamity which had befallen him, his mother, brethren and sisters. The next day, after sermon, I promised the people, that they should have the whole narrative of this affair read over to them, on the morrow. Accordingly, on Easter Tuesday, I caused them both, brother and sister, to stand on the steps of the pulpit while their narrative was reading. The whole people had a view of them, and saw the one free from that disagreeable tremor, and the other trembling all over Their narrative being read, I ordered them to retire out of the peoples sight, and began to discourse concerning the whole matter. While I was speaking, fresh acclamations were heard from the martyr's shrine, and the people, who were attending to me, began to run thither. For the sister, after having gone down from the steps where she stood, had betaken herself to the memorial of the martyr, to pray ; where she had no sooner laid hold of the bars, but she fell down in the same manner, as if she had been going to sleep, and rose up sound. While I was inquiring what had happened, to occasion that joy, the people came into the body of the Church, where I was, conducting her from the martyr's shrine, now perfectly cured She was led to the place where, but a while before, she had stood trembling. The people rejoiced to see that she was restored like her brother, and that their wishes for her had been heard before they began to pray : and the shouts of gladness and exaltation were so loud, that my ears could hardly bear them.' So far St. Austin.

These facts are so circumstantially recorded, and so well supported, that it were needless to recite

recite any others. The gravity and severity of St. *Austins* morals, are sufficient to exclude all suspicion of wilful fraud on his part: and his learning, the natural acuteness of his genius, and the pains he took to search into the truth of these matters, leave us no room to fear he was deceived himself. So that we must either allow, that these testimonies are sufficient to evince the truth of our assertion, and that we have full and satisfactory evidence for the continuance of miracles in the Church: or else it must be confessed, that no man can give satisfactory evidence in the case of miraculous effects: which is highly absurd in itself, and absolutely destructive of divine faith in its consequences.

Nevertheless, in conformity with the old maxim of setting a good face upon a bad cause, the Doctor delivers himself in a more confident decisive strain, in proportion as there is less appearance of reason on his side. It is observable in many parts of his inquiry, but in none more than in this; where he boldly declares, that he is content to rest the fate of his whole argument on these facts, related by St. *Austin*.
‘ And if either Dr. *Chapman*, says he, or Dr. *Berriman* can maintain these miracles to be credible, I shall no longer dispute the credibility of any, from the apostolic times down to ‘ our own’ [1]. A very fair proposal. But let him shew now what there is wanting to render them credible, either from the nature of the facts or from the character of the witness. As to the nature of the facts; to deny the credibility of them, on account of their mi-

[1] *Inq.* p. 145.



raculousness,

raculousness, were a weak evasion, and begging of the question. With equal reason might an infidel deny the credibility of the scripture-miracles, because they are extraordinary, and above the reach of nature. Then, as to the credit of the witness, certainly a person of St. *Austin's* character cannot fail of being a credible evidence for the truth of plain facts which happened before his own eyes, of the reality whereof he declares himself, after careful and mature examination, to be fully convinced.

However let us see the objections which *Middleton's objections.* he thinks may be reasonably made to them. The first is the *improbability* of the facts themselves. An objection which one might expect from the pen of a Deist, who denies all intercourse between God and man; but not from that of a Christian, who professes to believe that many wonderful works have been done by means of a divine interposition, which, by the strength of nature alone, could never have been effected. That the dead should be raised to life, cannot be incredible to a Christian, because the word of God assures him it has been effected. The same may be said of other miraculous works recorded in scripture, the healing of the sick, the giving of sight to the blind &c. which facts, considered in themselves, are no less improbable than these attested by St. *Austin*; being alike extraordinary and not reducible to the regular course of nature. So that whosoever denies any miracle, precisely on account of the incredibility or miraculousness of the fact, must at the same, if he would act consistently, renounce all belief of those which are mentioned by the inspired writers.

Much

Much the same may be said of the next objection, which he draws from a pretended incompetency of the instruments by which, and of the ends for which these miracles are said to have been performed. The instruments to which, under God, the miracles in question are ascribed, *viz.* the name of *Jesus*, the sign of the *cross*, holy *oil*, the *relicues* of the *Saints*, or handkerchiefs, or garments, or flowers which had touched those *relicues*, if we consider precisely their own natural powers, and nothing more, do indeed bear no manner of proportion to such wonderful effects: nor do we ascribe them to any natural efficacy of such instruments, but solely to the power of God, who is pleased, by such means, to make a manifestation of himself. We are assured, in holy writ, that a dead man who was cast into the sepulchre of *Eliseus*, revived and stood up on his feet, as soon as he had touched the *bones* of the prophet. We read that the Apostles of our Lord anointed the sick with *oil*, and healed them: that the *shadow* of St. Peter delivered the sick from their infirmities: that *handkerchiefs* and *aprons* which had touched the body of St. Paul, healed diseases and cast out wicked spirits. From these facts we learn that, in a question of this nature, no regard is due to such arguments as are built on a pretended incompetency of the instruments. Nor is it any thing better than downright arrogance, in weak man, to take upon himself to determine what instruments are competent, or incompetent, when we find that such an unlikely one, as an empty shadow, hath, under the divine influence, been the means of effecting miraculous cures. No one who believes in God, can doubt but he is able to do the most wonderful

ful works by the weakest instruments: and no one who believes the scripture can make a doubt but he has actually done so. In all which cases, the great end of such miraculous operations, is to promote the eternal salvation of men, and the greater glory of the Deity, either by making known or confirming some salutary truth, or by encouraging the practice of piety and good works.

In the next place he objects to the fidelity of St. *Austin*, whom he calls an *artful, interested* relator: which in effect deserves no answer; being a most base calumny, without the least shadow of a proof to support it. However, as the Doctor has observed, in another place, that the best grounds for forming a true judgment of any author, are his writings, I would willingly rest the cause upon the issue of such a trial. And if it can be found in the writings of this Father, that he maintained the lawfulness of forging miracles, or of propagating a falsehood, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, then I will frankly own, that I look on his authority to be nothing worth. But if the contrary may be made appear; if it be evident from his writings, that he looked upon all such deceit as sinful and forbidden by the law of God; what must all men of sense think of the Doctor's cause, which he cannot maintain, without charging one of the most revered bishops of the Church of God, with a crime so opposite to his most avowed principles. In his book to *Consentius* concerning *lies*, he expresses himself in these terms. ' Wherefore all lies, without exception, ' are to be excluded from the doctrine of religion, and even from every proposition which is
uttered

uttered concerning that doctrine, in the teaching and learning of it. Let it not be imagined, that there can possibly be any reason found, for telling a lie in such matters: since it is not justifiable to tell a lie about religious doctrines, even for the sake of converting a person more easily to them. For if the fence of truth be once broken down or even but lightly weakened, every thing will be rendered uncertain' (n). And in his book against *lies*, to the same *Consentius*, he says: ' Hold and maintain this as an inviolable truth, that in matters of holy religion a lie must never be told' (o). Now, if what the Doctor has observed be true, *viz.* that we ought not to form any other judgment of an author, than what is grounded on the testimony of his writings; it is evident, that we have good reason to assert that St. *Austin* would not have propagated a known forgery, for the promoting of any religious tenet or practice whatever. And that our *Inquirer*, in giving him the character of a *forger*, or *promoter of forgeries*, must necessarily have judged from prejudice or party, or some other motive which does not flow from the love of truth.

(n) St. *Augustin* : *l. de mendacio ad Consentium c. x.* Quamobrem a doctrinâ religionis, atque ab eis omnino enunciacionibus quæ propter doctrinam religionis enunciantur, cum illa docetur & discitur, omnia penitus mendacia removenda sunt. Nec ulla omnino causa inveniri posse credatur, cur in rebus talibus mentiendum sit: quando nec ideo in tâ doctrinâ mentiendum est, ut ad eam ipsam quisque facilius perducatur. Fractâ enim vel leviter diminutâ authoritate veritatis, omnia dubia remanebunt.

(o) Idem in *l. contra mendacium ad eundem. C. xxi.* Inconcusse teneas & defendas, in divina religione nunquam omnino esse mentiendum.

There is another objection brought against this Father and also against St. Chrysostom, which is drawn from their own words, and frequently alledged to disprove the continuance of miracles after the conversion of the Roman empire. The substance of it is this: that they both confess that in their days miracles had ceased in the Church.

But seeing that both of them positively bear witness to the working of miracles in their days, it is obvious to conclude, that the cessation, of which they speak, must be referred to some *particular* miraculous power, and not to *all miracles universally*. And if we consult their writings, we shall find that it is so. They allow that in their time there did not subsist that *superiour* power of working miracles which was conferred on the Apostles in the *fullest measure*, and whose effects were so visible in the faithful, on whom they *laid their bands*, that, generally speaking, some communication of the same power, was imparted to those who were confirmed by them. Nevertheless, by this they do not mean to deny the continuance of all miracles, without exception: for, as I but just now observed, they positively attest the existence of some in their own days. But, that I may not be thought to give this turn to the matter, without sufficient grounds; I shall appeal to St. Austin himself, who is undoubtedly the best interpreter of his own words. He took a review of the several works which he had written, in order to explain, amend, or retract such expressions in them as he thought might stand in need of alteration: this he did in two books; in the first whereof he considers the very words from which this objection is drawn; where he speaks thus of them: ‘ What I said; that those miracles were not suffered

suffered to continue unto our times, lest the soul
 should always be seeking after visible things, and
 men should become as cold or indifferent by the fre-
 quency, as they had been warmed or affected by the
 novelty of them. It is true: For at this time,
 when hands are imposed after baptism, the
 people do not so receive the Holy Ghost as to
 speak with all kind of tongues; nor are the sick
 healed now by the shadow of the preachers
 passing by, and such like works which were then
 done, but afterwards manifestly ceased. But
 what I said, is not to be so understood as to mean
 that no miracles are wrought now in the name
 of Christ. For at the time when I wrote that
 very book (*de vera relig.*) I myself knew, that a
 blind man had been cured in the city of Milan,
 at the reliques of the martyrs, and that some
 other miracles had been wrought, of which
 there are also so many instances at this time,
 that we cannot come at the knowledge of them
 all, nor even number up such as we do know'.
 (p).

(p) Item quod dixi. *Nec miracula ista in nostra tempora durare permissa sunt, ne anima semper visibilia quereret, et eorum consuetudine frigeceret genus humanum, quorum novitate flagravit.* Verum est quidem: non enim nunc usque cum manus imponitur baptizatis, sic accipiunt spiritum sanctum, ut loquantur linquis omnium gentium: aut nunc usque ad umbram transiuntum prædicatorum Christi sanantur infirmi, et si qua talia tunc facta sunt, quæ postea cessasse manifestum eit. Sed non sic accipendum est, quod dixi, ut nunc in Christi nomine fieri miracula nulla credantur. Nam ego ipse, quando illum ipsum librum scripsi, ad Mediolanensium corpora martyrum, in eadem civitate cæcum illuminatum fuisse jam neveram, et alia nonnulla, qualia tam multa etiam ipsis temporibus sunt, ut nec omnia cognoscere, nec ea quæ cognoscimus enumerare possimus. L. i Retrac. C. xiii.

But the objection, on which the Doctor lays the greatest stress, is drawn 'from the neglect, as he says, with which those miracles were treated by the Christians themselves; from the obscurity in which they lay; from the diligence of St. *Austin* to search them out; to get certificates of them, and to publish them to the people; and from the insufficiency of all his pains, to make them still regarded or at all remembered.' These he takes to be indications, that the people saw or suspected the cheat, and were tired with the repeated frauds of this kind, which their bishops were imposing upon them. For it is not possible to conceive any other reason of so surprizing a coldness &c. [1].

In answer to all that is here objected, I shall only refer to the account which St. *Austin* gives, of the miraculous cure of the trembling brother and sister, at the reliques of St. *Stephen*: in which narrative, if the reader can discover that neglect or indifference, or surprizing coldness of which the Doctor speaks, or any symptoms or marks of suspicion in the people, that they were imposed upon by their bishop; he must have better eyes than I have. To me, every part of it seems to shew forth the fullest conviction of the truth, with the warmest sentiments of gratitude and thanksgiving, that can be expressed.

Some other miracles, indeed, were more obscure than this, not being wrought on so publick an occasion, nor in the presence of such a concourse of people; in which cases the diligence of St. *Austin* in searching into them, and getting proper certificates, is highly commendable. But it is not to be expected, that the reading of such cer-

[1] Inq. 145.

certificates

tificates to the people, should make those strong impressions on their minds, or cause those warm emotions in their hearts, as if they had then actually seen the wonderful works done before their eyes. Even the most authentick certificates of miracles, that can possibly be, those I mean, of the gospel itself, are every day read with much coldness, but the truth of them is not therefore to be suspected or called in question.

§ 6. By what has been already said, it manifestly appears, not only that it was the constant and settled persuasion of the Fathers, down into the fifth century, that miracles had not yet ceased in the church of God; but also, that they have delivered down to posterity such convincing evidence of the reality of them, that we cannot with any reason, refuse to be of the same opinion. A question of this nature cannot be raised to any higher degree of certainty, than that of *human authority*: and of this we have as much as any reasonable person can require. We have illustrious witnesses, men of exquisite sense, extensive learning and sincere piety, who relate what happened within the compass of their own knowledge, facts in which they were sometimes personally concerned, they pledge their faith for the truth of what they say; and the principles which they openly professed, and the purity of their lives, were such as render it certain, that they would not, for any consideration whatever, have propagated a known falsehood.

If men of this character may not be deemed credible witnesses of miraculous facts; then we must fairly conclude, that there is no such thing, in nature, as rendering these facts credible, by human

Reflections
on the
foregoing
instances.

man authority : which, however absurd it may appear, is plainly the result of the Doctor's system. For he himself will not pretend to say, that these illustrious Fathers were worse than other men ; if one may frame any judgment of his mind from his words, there is reason to believe that he looked upon them as the best, at least among Christians. His words are, ' if the miracles then of the fourth century, so solemnly attested by the most celebrated and revered Fathers of the Church, are to be rejected after all as fabulous, it must needs give a fatal blow to the credit of all the miracles *even of the preceding centuries* ; since there is not a single Father whom I have mentioned in this fourth age, who for zeal and piety may not be compared with the best of the more ancient, and for knowledge and learning be preferred to them all [1]. ' In consequence of this, he must allow, that the existence of miracles, in the fourth age, is as certain as the word and testimony of the most learned and most pious Christians can make it ; and greater certainty than this, I think, no reasonable person will require.

In order to be convinced, that all the very best and most revered Fathers of the primitive Church, were no better than a pack of designing knaves and impostors, every impartial reader will, I am persuaded, demand some stronger proof, than the confident assertion of a *Middleton*. Could he have shewn, from their writings, that they maintained the lawfulness of cheating and deceiving, or could he have alledged any particular transaction of their lives, in which they had been detected, or proved to be jugglers and forgers : he ought to

have done it in the first place : because the decision of the present debate, depends greatly, I may say wholly, on the credit of the witnesses. But since he has not done it, we may readily conclude it was above his reach, and that his shameful slanders deserve no regard, but that of contempt or indignation, being not only destitute of all manner of proof, but even contradicted by the strongest arguments drawn from their writings, their lives and the consent of ages.

Seeing then that nothing material can be alledged against the testimony of the primitive Fathers, and that the real existence of miracles is positively and solemnly attested by them ; I should be glad to hear a solid reason given, why we may not acquiesce in such invincible authority.

There is one reason, I know, will be offered : but, I am convinced, no *impartial inquirer* will esteem it satisfactory. The reason I mean is, that such miracles are irreconcileable and inconsistent with protestancy, and therefore must be rejected at all events. If the very best of the primitive Christians may be credited in what they relate, the consequence will be that we must admit the veneration of reliques, the invocation of Saints, prayer for the dead, sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation and several other articles, which have been supported by miracles, solemnly attested by those best of men. But if these consequences must be avoided, as a Protestant will undoubtedly say they must, else popery will creep in : then indeed there is no other resource left, but to treat all the most venerable bishops of antiquity with contempt and ribaldry : for it is evident, that the credit of the reformation and of the primitive Fathers cannot possibly stand together. *Luther*, the first founder

der of the protestant religion, being closely pressed by many clear and unanswerable testimonies of those great Doctors of the Church, found it necessary to reject that authority, which it was impossible to reconcile to the novelties he had broached. Accordingly, he declared aloud, that he did not value it a rush, though a thousand *Cyprians* and a thousand *Austins* stood against him. Many others indeed, especially the more moderate and more learned of our country-men, could not help seeing that such a declaration was very prejudicial to their cause. It gave the world a very bad idea of the reformation, by discovering that its principles were different from that religion, which all those holy and learned men, in their several ages, had professed and taught: while, at the same time, by extinguishing all the lights we receive from the practice of former ages, it introduced nothing but darkness and anarchy into the Church. They thought it best, therefore, to claim a conformity with the primitive Christians, and to elude the force of the passages objected to them, as well as they could, by pitiful distinctions and evasive answers, rather than be thought to disagree with those eminent Fathers, whose orthodoxy had never been called in question.

But Dr. Middleton, after having duly weighed the merits of both sides of the question, being convinced that the practices and doctrines of the Fathers are agreeable to the catholick religion, and irreconcileable with protestantism, and being himself, as he tells us, of a frank and open nature, warmly disposed to speak his mind, has declared himself entirely in favour of the answer given by *Luther*; and, like a true son of such a father, has treated the most celebrated of the primitive Christians

tians with a most unchristian freedom. The facts which they relate, and the practices which they recommend, had alarmed his zeal, he discovered popery in them, too glaring to be concealed by a cob-web distinction, and he plainly saw, that he must either renounce the Fathers, or the reformation. But it will be proper to hear his own words on this head. ‘ After the conversion of the Roman empire, says he, we shall find the greatest part of their boasted miracles to have been wrought either by *monks*, or *relicues*, or the *sign of the cross*, or *consecrated oil*: wherefore, if we admit the miracles, we must necessarily admit the rites, for the sake of which they were wrought: they both rest on the same bottom and mutually establish each other. For it is a maxim which must be allowed by all Christians, that whenever any sacred rite or religious institution becomes the instrument of miracles, we ought to consider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation.’

Thus he shews how necessary it is for Protestants to reject the miracles which are related and attested by the primitive Fathers; because, if they be once admitted, it will follow, by a plain and unavoidable consequence, that the rites and practices, by which and for the sake of which, they were wrought, must needs be lawful and commendable, as Catholicks hold; and not superstitious and idolatrous, as the reformers say.

And here let it be observed, that though such rites and practices are rejected by the reformers, they were embraced by the primitive Christians. And Middleton, while he denies the reality of the miracles attested by them, at the same time confesses that their principles and practices were such

as are at present avowed by the catholick Church. So that, whether the miracles be true or false, this at least is confessed, that those illustrious Fathers, those shining lights of the christian world, were utter strangers to those principles which have been introduced by the reformation. A matter which, though made so light of by the Doctor, will, I am persuaded, appear, to every unbiased Christian, an important step towards clearing up our present controversies in religion.

§. 7. *Theodoret*, bishop of *Cyrus*, *Theodoret*, whose great learning and piety are conspicuous in the writings which he published on various subjects, declares himself to have been an eye-witness to several miracles wrought by the holy monks of his time. He was intimately acquainted with many of them, an account of whose wonderful lives he has transmitted to posterity. That of *St. Symeon Stylites*, whom he often visited, he wrote before the death of the Saint, at a time when there were thousands of living witnesses, who could attest the truth of what he related. Yet so extraordinary was the life of that wonderful man, that he declares he is afraid lest it should appear, to succeeding ages, an empty fable. ‘ For the facts, says he, are ‘ above the reach of human nature: but the ‘ world measures every thing according to the ‘ extent of nature alone. So that when any thing ‘ is related, which exceeds those bounds, the ‘ story is condemned as a fiction by them that ‘ are strangers to the mysteries of God’. A very just remark! we see it verified every day: and some perhaps may think that *Middleton* is a glaring instance of it.

But

But to come to St. Symeon's miracles. ' I myself, says *Theodore*, saw also another most celebrated miracle. A captain of one of the *Saracen* tribes came to the holy man, begging earnestly that he would relieve a certain person, who had been seized with a palsy on the road. The sick man being brought before the company, the Saint ordered him to abjure the impiety of his ancestors: he readily obeyed, and did so. Then he asked him, whether he believed in the Father, and the only begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost: He answered, that he did believe. Then Symeon said, as thou believest, rise up. And when he was risen up, he ordered him to take the captain of the tribe and carry him on his shoulders to the tent. He took him up, and walked away with him that instant. And all that were present gave glory to God'.

' But I was not only a spectator of his miracles, continues *Theodore*; I was also a hearer of his predictions. That dry and barren year which we had, and the famine and pestilence which followed after it, he foretold two years before it happened On another occasion he foretold an irruption of locusts, which happened thirty days after, when there came such a prodigious swarm, that they intercepted the light of the sun Besides, when I was persecuted by a certain person, he told me that before fifteen days were past, the quarrel would be at an end: and I found by experience that his prediction was true'.

This may suffice to convince the reader, that *Theodore*, at least, must have been as certain of the reality of these miraculous facts, as any man can

can be of the truth of what he sees and hears himself; and therefore that his evidence cannot, with any show of reason, be rejected. If he has imposed a cheat upon us, we must conclude him to have been one of the most impudent, as well as the most imprudent cheats, that ever lived; who could publish to the world his own dreams and fictions for real and recent facts, declaring that they were done in the face of the world, and insisting upon the notoriety of them, and that too in the very place, which was the scene of action, where it was in the power of thousands to contradict and detect the forgery. But it were madness to suspect, that *Theodoret* could be guilty of offering such an insult to the senses of his country-men, or that he could have escaped a detection, if he had done so.

Nevertheless, though the testimony of this learned prelate does not seem liable to any one reasonable exception, yet *Middleton* is much displeased with Dr. *Chapman*, a divine of his own communion, for his having asserted and maintained the credibility of such facts, on the evidence of *Theodoret*. Wherefore, to put his brethren in a better method of treating such subjects for the future, he says: ' My business is to inquire whether what he has so peremptorily affirmed, be true, or credible, or fit for a Protestant divine to impose upon the consciences of Christians' [1]. So then, besides *truth* and *credibility*, there is another article to be considered, *viz.* the *fitness* or *consistency* of such facts with the principles of the reformation. A very material point truly; and

[1] Inq p. 164.

which.

which, in the Doctor's system, deserves to come first under consideration. For it will be downright loss of time and labour, to search into the truth or reality of any miraculous fact; if, after that is discovered, it proves unfit for a Protestant to assert. Let it first be measured by the reformation rule, and if it will not square with that, there needs no farther inquiry; true or false it matters not; it must at all events be rejected.

But let us see what the Doctor has offered, in opposition to the testimony of *Theodoret*. First he begins by giving an account of St. *Symeon*, whose austerities and method of life he calls *whims* and *extravagancies*, and then concludes in these words. ‘This is the account in short of the life of *Symeon Stylites*: the bare recital of which, though attested by ten *Theodorets*, must needs expose the absurdity of believing, that it could in any manner be suggested or directed by divine inspiration’.

But that is not the point in question. Whether or no St. *Symeon* was directed, by any particular inspiration, to embrace that austere kind of life, and to dwell so many years on the top of a pillar, is a matter which could not fall under the fences of those who conversed with him. But that he did actually lead such a life, and wrought many evident miracles, is what was seen by thousands.

Theodoret indeed, expresses himself thus on that head. ‘For my own part, I am of opinion that it was not without the direction of providence, that he entered on that method of life. For which reason, I exhort those who are apt to be censorious, that they would not give a loose to their tongues, and rashly condemn; but rather

‘ consider what our Lord has often done to awake the slothful’. After which he relates several singularities, which the prophets were expressly commanded by God to practice, in order to make the deeper impression on the minds of those to whom they were sent: as when *Jeremy* was commanded to make bands and chains and to put them about his own neck. c. xxvii. ‘ For as God, says he, commanded such things to be done, for the benefit of those who lived in sloth and indolence; so he has afforded us this new and wonderful sight, to the end that the novelty and wonder of it might draw all men to see, and add weight to the instructions which the Saint gave to such as came to him And that this was the case, seems to be plain from the effects. For his living in that manner, on a pillar, was the occasion of many thousands receiving the light of the Gospel. The fame of his sanctity and miracles was spread through the whole world; people of all nations flocked to him, not only from the *East*, but from *Spain* and *Gaul* and even *Britain* itself. And our author declares that he had seen the infidels, by companies of two hundred or three hundred, or sometimes a thousand at a time, renounce their errors and embrace Christianity, through the exhortations and wonderful works of this Saint on his pillar.

These are *Theodore*’s thoughts on this extraordinary man, and the singular austerities which he practised. Let the unbiassed reader judge, whether he has not delivered himself more like a good Christian, than Doctor *Middleton* has, who represents this eminent Saint as a whimsical or mad Enthusiast, not as a faithful servant of God. *The word*

word of the cross, to them that perish is foolishness 1. Cor. 1. 20. There are too many who, on this side the grave, sneer and scoff at those who renounce the pleasures of the world, and take up their crosses, and, with St. Paul, chastise the body, to bring it into subjection. But the time will come when the scene shall be altered, and these same scoffers be forced, through anguish of spirit to say : *These are they whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth &c.* Wisd. c. v.

But to say no more of this : The credibility of St. Symeon's miracles depends not on our opinion whether he was guided, or not, by any special inspiration, to embrace that kind of life, but on the authority of the witness who attests them. What the Doctor objects on this score, I shall now consider.

First he observes, that the working of miracles by St. Symeon is ' a matter of opinion, rather than of fact ; of which very few could judge, fewer still be certain, and scarce one perhaps of all the thousands, who saw him, could be a competent witness' [1].

With regard to this piece of refined sophistry, I would gladly ask one question : Whether the existence of a miraculous fact be possible ? If it is ; why may not a miracle be matter of fact ? If the raising of *Lazarus* to life was matter of fact, why may not the same be said of the restoring of the paralytick by St. Symeon ? I must con-

[1] Inq. p. 169.

fess, I cannot, for my life, comprehend what can be the drift of this distinction between *matter of opinion* and *matter of fact*, as it is here applied to the miraculous works attested by *Theodoret*; unless it be to insinuate, that no man living can be a competent witness of a miracle. This is the only construction I can put upon it. And I have observed before, and cannot help observing here again, that these shifts to which the Doctor is reduced, through the badness of his cause, are inconsistent with his protestations of believing the miracles recorded in the gospels. If the spectators, whether *Jews* or *Pagans*, who saw the miracles wrought by the Apostles, were competent witnesses of them, why may not we say the same of *Theodoret* and those who saw the works done by St. *Symeon*? But if no man living, or scarce one of many thousands can be a competent witness in cases of this nature; why did the Apostles work miracles before the people? Was it to convert them by arguments of which they were not competent judges? Or how can such people be excused from rashness in their conversion; if they embraced Christianity, on the credit of arguments, of which they were not capable of judging?

After this, he proceeds to shew, that the character of *Theodoret* himself suggests many obvious reasons, against the credibility of the miracles attested by him. For this end he inserts the account which *Du Pin* gives of him; ' that his birth was accompanied by miracles, both before and after it, which he himself relates in his religious history: that, if we may believe him, his mother was healed of an incurable disease in her eye, by one *Peter* a monk: that upon the prayers

prayers of another monk called *Macedonius*, God granted her to conceive a son, after thirteen years of barrenness, and to bring him safely into the world: that by the prayers of the first of those monks, *Peter*, she was preserved also from death after her delivery: and that her husband and her son had often felt the effects of *Peter's* virtue and sanctity, and were cured of their distempers by touching onely his girdle so far *Du Pin*.

This account, says the Doctor, is drawn from *Theodoret* himself: whence we learn, that he was nursed and trained in all the bigotry and superstition, with which that age abounded: taught from his very cradle to venerate monks and their miracles: and made to believe, with the first knowledge which he received, that he owed his very existence to the efficacy of their prayers. He tells us that his mother sent him once every week to beg the blessing of the monk *Peter*; and that he went as often also, to receive the instructions and benediction of the other monk *Macedonius* And as *Theodoret* is said to have been very tenacious of the principles which he had once imbibed; so it was his constant practice through his whole life, to visit the cells and habitations of all the celebrated monks of those times; with whose lives and miracles he has filled his 'religious history' [1], from which the Doctor here transcribes a story or two, as a specimen, he says, both of the judgement and the fidelity of the compiler. The first is, that distempers were driven away by the girdle of the monk

[2] Inq. p. 178, 9.

Peter. The other is, that another monk called *James* having conceived some doubts, whether certain reliques, said to be St. *John Baptist's*, were really so, or not: he was assured of their reality in a vision. 'With these stories, says he, 'I shall leave it to the reader to determine, 'whether a writer of this turn and character can 'reasonably be thought unprejudiced, and of an 'authority uncontestable, or worthy indeed of 'any credit at all, where the honor of monks 'and the reality of their miracles are the points 'in question' [1].

Now, for my own part, I confess, it appears very strange to me, and must, I think, appear the same to every unbiassed reader, that the authority of *Theodoret* is to be disregarded, barely because he had a virtuous education, was brought up in sentiments of piety, and taught from his infancy to have a great veneration for the servants of God, to attend to their instructions, and to beg their blessing and prayers. Because he honoured those wonderful men, and admired their virtues, must we therefore conclude that he was either so weak, as not to be capable of discerning what was done in his own presence: or so wicked, as not to scruple to propagate the grossest fictions? Is it not more reasonable to think that the early good instructions, which he received from those holy preceptors, and his tenacious adherence to the principles which he had once imbibed, are sufficient to exclude all suspicion of wilful deceit?

I need not observe how prejudicial such objections as these are to Christianity itself. Every

[1] *Inq.* p. 181.

thinking man must see, that the testimony of the Apostles, concerning Christ and his miracles, may be brought into question by the same arguments as are here employed against *Theodore's* evidence. They may be represented as having the most profound veneration for their master, no ways inferior to that which *Theodore* had for the monks: after which, an infidel writer may leave it to the reader to determine, whether such persons can reasonably be thought unprejudiced, or worthy indeed of any credit at all, where the honour of their master and the reality of his miracles are the points in question.

The next objection, which he offers, is relative to the consequences which would follow, in case the testimony of *Theodore* were admitted for good and lawful evidence. For though he declares in his preface that he is not scrupulous with regard to consequences, yet that is to be understood of some particular consequences only, not of all. For instance, if the authority of the inspired writings be weakened by his system, he is in no manner of concern about that: if the consequence will follow, it must be admitted; for who can help it? But on other occasions, when Popery is the point in question, no man living is more scrupulous and apprehensive. He carries it to such a degree, that he will rather deny the most plain and evident facts, than admit of any thing from which he foresees that consequences may be drawn in favour of the catholick Church. Hence it is, that, in order to evince the necessity of rejecting *Theodore's* authority, he gives, out of *Du Pin*, the following reflection on his *religious history*.

' This history contains many things remarkable
' concerning the discipline of this time. By it
we

' we see, that great honor was given to the Saints;
 ' that they were invoked ; that men expected to
 ' be helped by their prayers ; that their reliques
 ' were sought after with great earnestness &c.
 Which account, taken from *Du Pin*, he closes
 with this assertion of his own ; that ' the whole
 ' turn and purpose of *Theodore's* sacred history
 ' tends to strengthen the interest of the Romish,
 ' and to hurt the credit of the protestant cause ;
 ' by celebrating the forged miracles of monks,
 ' and Saints, and reliques, and holy water, and
 ' sacred oil. [1].'

With the same view, in his Introductory dis-
 course he gives the following extract from *Theo-
 doret Ser. 8. de Martyribus*. ' The temples of
 ' our martyrs are shining and conspicuous, emi-
 ' nent for their grandor, and the variety of their
 ' ornaments, and displaying far and wide the
 ' splendor of their beauty. These we visit, not
 ' once or twice, or five times in the year, but
 ' frequently offer up hymns each day to the Lord
 ' of them ; in health we beg the continuance
 ' of it ; in sickness, the removal of it ; the child-
 ' less beg children ; and the barren to become
 ' mothers ; and when these blessings are obtain-
 ' ed, we beg the secure enjoyment of them.
 ' When we undertake any journey, we beg
 ' them to be our companions and guides in it :
 ' and when we return safe, we pay them our
 ' thanks : and that those who pray with faith and
 ' sincerity, obtain what they ask, is manifestly tes-
 ' tified by the number of offerings which are
 ' made to them, in consequence of the benefits
 ' received. For some offer the figures of eyes ;

‘ some of feet, some of hands, made either of gold or of silver, which the Lord accepts, though but of little value; measuring the gift by the faculties of the giver. But all these are the evident proofs of the cures of as many dis- tempers, being placed there as monuments of the fact, by those who have been made whole. The same monuments likewise proclaim the power of the dead. Whose power also demon- strates their God to be the true God.’ Thus *Theodoret*; to which the Doctor adds. ‘ Now this is nothing else but the very picture of that same superstition, which is practised at this day by the *Papists*, and was borrowed of old from the Pagans. *Livy* tells the same thing of the tem- ples of the heathen gods, which *Theodoret* does here of the temples of their Saints [1].’
‘ Thus we see to what a state of things, the mi- racles of the fourth and fifth centuries would re- duce us: they would call us back again to the old superstition of our ancestors; would fill us with monks and reliques, and masses, and all the other trinkets which the treasury of *Rome* can supply [2].’

Thus the Doctor has displayed the conse- quences of admitting the testimony of *Theodoret*, in the doing of which, he has, in my opinion, made it very evident that it is not fit for a Pro- testant divine to assert such things. But the main question about the truth and credibility of the facts still remains where it was. This is what we are chiefly concerned about. To discover truth, wherever it is, is the end of our inquiry. And when it is once discovered, we think ourselves bound to embrace it, without any reserve. We

[1] Introd. lxviii.

[2] p. lxx.

should

should be ashamed to reject it, under pretence of its clashing with our other principles. One truth cannot possibly clash with another. If the facts attested by *Theodore* are true, they ought to be admitted, let the consequence be what it will. Let the consequences of truth reach as far as they can ; the farther they reach the better ; the more errors they will detect, and the more they will dissipate of those clouds and mists, in which the crafty and interested part of mankind are apt to involve and disguise the real nature of things, from the view of their fellow-creatures [1].

St. Victor § 8. St. Victor, bishop of *Vite* in *Africa*, *Vitenis*. in his account of the violent persecution which the *Vandals*, under their *Arian* Prince *Hunnerick*, raised against the *Catholicks*, relates two celebrated miracles which were wrought at that time. L. 2. c. 5. There was at *Carthage*, says he, a blind man, called *Felix*, universally known. On the night of the feast of the *Epiphany*, God said to him in his sleep : Go to my servant bishop *Eugenius*, and tell him, that I have sent thee to him ; and when he shall bless the font for baptism, he shall touch thy eyes, and they shall be opened, and thou shalt see the light. The blind man gave no heed to it, imagining it to be but an empty dream. The same thing was repeated to him a second time ; but he still neglected. At last finding himself urged to it a third time, and being severely rebuked for his little faith, he awaked, the boy who was accustomed to lead him, and went in haste to the church of St. *Fauſtus*, where he poured forth his prayers with many tears,

[1] *Mid. pref. p. ix.*

and

and intreated a deacon, called *Peregrin*, to let the bishop know that he had something to communicate to him. *Eugenius* ordered that he should be conducted to him; the people were then singing the night office. The blind man told the bishop all that had passed, and declared he would not leave him, till he had restored his sight. The holy prelate said to him: Go away, my brother, I am the greatest sinner alive, for which reason God has suffered me to live to see these wretched times. *Felix*, instead of retiring, embraced his knees and repeated, without ceasing, these words: *Restore my sight, as God commands you*: The bishop seeing that the man had so strong faith, and that the time drew near, went to the sacred font, accompanied by his clergy; and having fallen down on his knees, and offered up his sighs and tears to heaven, he performed the benediction of the water: then rising up, he said to the blind man: I have told you already, brother *Felix*, that I am a sinner; but I pray that he who has vouchsafed to visit you, will do to you according to your faith, and give light to your eyes: uttering these words, he made the sign of the cross on his eyes, and that very moment God restored his sight. The bishop detained him near his own person, till all had been baptized who were presented for it; for fear lest the people should stifle the poor man, by crowding about him. The ceremony being ended, the people were informed of it: and *Felix*, according to custom, accompanied *Eugenius* to the altar, upon which the bishop laid the offering which he made in thanksgiving for his cure; and never was heard such a noise as the people made in

the

‘ the transports of their joy. The news was soon carried to *Hunnerick*, the *Vandal* king. *Felix* was apprehended and questioned about all that had happened, and the recovery of his sight. He gave a faithful account of every circumstance: whereby the *Arian* bishops were put to the utmost confusion. The reality of the miracle could not be denied, for *Felix* was known to the whole city: therefore they said, *Eugenius* had effected it by magick’.

L. 3. c. 4. He relates another miracle which happened in a town of *Mauritania Cæsariensis*, from which most part of the Catholicks had fled into *Spain*, to avoid the persecution, except a few who could not find means to withdraw themselves. These few who remained behind were tempted by the *Arian* bishop *Cyril*, first by caresses, and then by threats, to change their religion. But God strengthened them against his temptations: and they all assembled together in one house where they celebrated the divine mysteries. *Cyril* being informed of this, sent advice of it to *Carthage*, and *Hunnerick* forthwith dispatched away a Count with orders to bring them all together into the market place, and to cut out their tongues to the roots and to chop off their right hands. These orders were executed. But through the grace of the Holy Ghost, they were enabled to speak, and continue now to speak, as they did before. And if any one makes a difficulty of believing this, let him go to *Constantinople*, and there he may see one of them, *Reparatus* by name, a sub-deacon, who speaks perfectly, and is highly esteemed by all in the palace of the emperor *Zeno*.

To elude the force of this testimony the Doctor plays off several surmises, by way of solution of the matter. ' It

Middle-
ton's ob-
jections.

' may not, says he, improbably be supposed on this occasion, that tho' their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, and are said to have been so cut, yet the sentence might not be so strictly executed, as not to leave in some of them, such a share of that organ, as was sufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the use of speech. It is remarkable also, that two of this company are said to have utterly lost the faculty of speaking; who had been deprived perhaps of their intire tongues: for tho' this be ascribed, to the peculiar judgment of God, for a punishment of the immorality, of which they were afterwards guilty, yet that seems to be a forced and improbable solution of the matter. We are told likewise, that another of these Confessors, who had been dumb from his birth, yet, by losing his tongue with the rest, acquired also the use of speech; which is a circumstance so singular and extraordinary, that it carries with it a suspicion of art and contrivance, to enhance the luster of the miracle [1].

This is an artful contrivance, to elude the force of plain evidence by an arbitrary hypothesis. No fact can be better attested than this is; nevertheless he tells us, it may not improbably be supposed that their tongues were not cut out to the roots: though he knew, that the testimony of St. Victor is corroborated by that of others, who had even opened their mouths, in order to make their observations with more exactness and certainty.

[1] *Inq.* 183.

Æneas of Gaza, in his dialogue between *Theophrastus* and *Axitheus*, assures us of the same in these words: ‘ I myself saw these men, and heard them talk, and was astonished that they could speak so articulately: I looked for the organ of speech, and not trusting my ears, I examined the matter with my eyes, and having opened their mouths, saw that their tongues were entirely cut away root and all. Upon which I was amazed not only that they could speak, but even that they had not expired in the execution’. *Procopius*, another writer, attests, that he also had seen them at *Constantinople*. And *St. Gregory the Great* l. 3. Dial. c. 32. says. ‘ At the time when I was sent agent for the affairs of the Church, to the emperor, I met with an ancient bishop at *Constantinople*, who assured me, that he had seen the mouths of those *African Confessors*, and that their tongues, were so entirely cut away to the roots, that there appeared, as it were an open void gulph into their throats: and nevertheless, with those empty mouths, they articulated their words fully and distinctly’.

As to those two of this company who are said to have utterly lost the faculty of speaking, the substance of the fact is this, as I find it related by *Procopius* and *St. Gregory*. At first they had their speech miraculously restored, no less than the rest: but having fallen afterwards into certain immoralities, that miraculous gift was withdrawn from them: which is supposed to have been done for a punishment of their crimes: in which solution of the matter, there does not appear any thing forced or improbable. But the Doctor’s solution of it is worthy of himself. He supposes that

that these two were deprived of their entire tongues; the natural consequence of which was the entire loss of speech, from the moment of the execution. Now what is this to the purpose when the question is concerning persons of whom it is attested, that they had the faculty of speaking, after the loss of their tongues, and were not deprived of it till after they had fallen into irregularities?

But what he adds is very extraordinary: *viz.* that this their loss of speech is ascribed, by the authors who relate the fact, to the peculiar judgement of God, for a punishment of the immoralities of which they were *afterwards* guilty. This, I say, cannot but appear very extraordinary to every one who considers the whole period. In the first part of it he supposes without the least intimation to the contrary that they never spoke at all, after their tongues were cut out; because they were intirely deprived of them, to the very roots. In the second part, he disapproves of that solution of the matter, which ascribes this loss of speech to the judgment of God punishing them for immoralities of which they were *afterwards* guilty. From which representation of the matter, it is obvious for any one, who is not acquainted with the historical fact, to conclude, that the authors, who relate this miracle, say that God punished these two men for their crimes, *before they had committed them*. Which is no better than blasphemy; and a shameful misrepresentation of those authors sentiments. For, as I observed above, they relate that the faculty of speaking was not withdrawn from them, till *after* they had rendered themselves guilty.

In the next place, he thinks there is reason to suspect some forgery in this relation; because it is said, that one of them acquired the use of speech, who had been dumb before he lost his tongue. But why this should be thought more extraordinary than other parts of the history, I cannot conceive. The gift of speech was miraculous in them all: nor does it appear any ways more singular, that this gift should be imparted to one who had been dumb from his birth, than to another who had been rendered dumb by having his tongue cut out to the root.

But after all, the Doctor had no need of these surmises. He offers them as essays, to shew his skill in anatomizing miraculous events; which having done, he comes now, as he says, more close to the point, to prove that this boasted miracle was no miracle at all. For though it has been generally thought, that the tongue is absolutely necessary to the use of speech, yet there is an instance, in the present century, of a girl, who, though born without a tongue, talked as distinctly and easily as if she had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ, a particular account of which is given in the memoirs, of the Academy of sciences at *Paris* an: 1718, drawn up by an eminent physician; who, in the same account, refers us likewise to another instance; published about eighty years before, by a surgeon of *Sau-mur*, of a boy who lost his tongue by a gangrene or ulcer, and yet retained the faculty of speaking. Upon which he tells us, with an air of triumph, that the humble testimony of this single physician overturns, at once, all the dignified authorities of Senators, Chancellors, Bishops, Archbishops, and Popes.

Strange

Strange indeed! He that will not believe the positive attestations of the most learned and most holy men, who have adorned the Church of Christ, now gives absolute and unlimited credit to the word of a single physician, of whose sincerity and veracity he cannot possibly be so well assured, as he may be of that of the primitive Fathers. If this physician must be credited in his account of this singular and extraordinary accident, surely no less credit is due to an *Austin*, or an *Ambrose*, or a *Cyprian*, who were not inferior to him, either in probity or judgment.

But to come to the point. Supposing the truth of what is attested by this physician; for I am not so credulous to believe all that is to be met with in academical memoirs or philosophical transactions, especially where I cannot be sufficiently informed of the qualities of the author; but, I say, supposing it to be true, it does not answer to the case of the *African* confessors, on several accounts. First, because to have brought a parallel case to theirs, he ought to have alledged an example of a person talking immediately after his tongue had been cut out to the root, as well as he did before, so as to discover no defect in speech arising from that loss. Secondly, we are not assured, that this boy and girl had not some excrescence or other left in their mouths, which might in some measure supply the want of a tongue, so far at least, as to render them capable of learning to speak, and improving their faculty by practice. Thirdly, though we grant that the tongue is not *absolutely* necessary to the use of speech, but that a person's mouth may *possibly* be so formed by nature as to enable him to speak without that organ; yet it

is certain that it is, generally speaking, necessary; and that dumbness is the natural and common consequence of the tongues being intirely cut out. So that, if the instance, related by the physician, be true; it is very singular and extraordinary, of which there is not, perhaps, an example to be met with, once in a century, through the whole extent of Europe: and therefore it is absolutely improbable that it should happen to a considerable number of men at once, all living in the same territory, as was the case of these *African* confessors.

St. Fulgentius, bishop of *Rufpa* in *Africa*, wrought several miracles, as appears from his life written by one of his disciples. During the persecution which the *Arians* raised against the catholick Church, he was sent into banishment; together with several other bishops at which time he foretold that peace should soon be restored to the faithful. ‘Weep no more, said he to one of his friends who was grieving for his departure, weep no more: we shall return to you: You shall soon see us again, and the catholick Church shall be at liberty. But, I intreat you to keep this a secret’. For he always endeavoured to conceal the wonderful works which God wrought by his means, saying that miracles did not make a man better, but only more known.

St. Ennodius, bishop of *Pavia*, in his 24th epistle to *Faustus*, relates of himself, that being sick of a fever he applied to a physician, but was told, that there was no remedy for him. ‘My hopes increased, says he, when the help of man failed. I addressed myself with tears to the heavenly physician,

* cian, and anointed my dying body with some blessed oil, as a remedy against the fever'. Upon which, he declares that he was cured that instant.

Cyril of Scythopolis, a monk, has with great fidelity, transmitted down to us the lives of some eminent Saints, of his own times. In that of St. Euthymius abbot, he relates several miracles which were wrought by that great servant of God, as he had been assured by eye-witnesses, and persons concerned in the transactions: in particular, that he cured, by prayer and the sign of the cross, the son of an Arabian prince, one half of whose body had been seized with a dead palsy; which miracle was followed by the conversion of the father and great numbers of the Arabians. Moreover he attests that he had been eye-witness to several miracles wrought at the reliques of the same Saint.

And in his life of St. John the Silent, whose disciple he was, he mentions several miracles of which he had been informed by eye-witnesses, and some which he had seen himself. ' One day, says he, when I was at his window to receive his instructions, a certain person, called George, brought his son, who was tormented by an evil spirit; and having left him before the window, went away. The venerable man being touched with compassion at the sight of this child's misery, offered up prayers for him and anointed him with blessed oil, and he was delivered that instant'. The Saint was living at the same time when Cyril wrote this account.

St. Gregory, bishop of Tours, in his account of the miracles of St. Martin, St. Gregory declares of himself, that being in a

violent fever, which had brought him to the point of death, he was suddenly cured at the reliques of that Saint an. 563. And ten years after, he was cured of a dysentery by some of the dust from the Saint's tomb; after he had tried, to no purpose, all that the physicians could do for him. He mentions also how a dead child was brought to life, by its garments being laid on the tomb of the Saint; and was actually living at the time of his writing this account. Besides which, he relates many other miracles, mentioning the names, qualities, and infirmities of the persons on whom they were wrought.

Evagrius the Historian, in his fourth book c. 26 relates the following miracle, which happened at *Apamea*, where he was present and saw it. In a time of publick danger, the bishop of the place set forth the venerable cross, for the people to honour and to kiss it, and carried it in procession round the whole Church, exposed to the view of all the congregation, in the same manner as it was customary to do on the solemn days of adoration. ‘ Now, says *Evagrius*, as the bishop went forwards in the procession, a great flame followed after him, without burning, but shining so bright, that the whole place, where he carried the holy cross, seemed to be on fire. And this not once or twice, but often, when the bishop made that procession, at the request of the people. On this account, a picture was painted on the cieling of the Church, to represent that miraculous flame, and preserve the remembrance of it: which continued there, till the Church and whole city were burnt down by the Persians’.

And

And in his sixth book c. 23. speaking of St. Symeon *Stylites* the younger, and the many great miracles wrought by him, and of his gift of prophecy, and discovering the secrets of mens hearts, he says: 'I myself having lost all my children, was troubled with a thousand thoughts, and wondered why the same losses did not befall the pagans who were blessed with many children. Now, though I had never disclosed these thoughts to any one, yet he discovered the secrets of my mind, and wrote to me, that I should put them away, because they were displeasing to God'.

St. *Gregory the Great*, Pope, in his four books of dialogues, relates many St. *Gregory the Great*. miracles, of which he had been informed by venerable persons, on whose fidelity he could depend. L. 1. c. x. He tells us that *Fortunatus*, bishop of *Todi* in *Italy*, restored sight to a blind man, by making the sign of the cross on his eyes. And a certain *Gotb*, having broken his thigh bone in two, was so perfectly healed, by having some of the same prelate's holy water sprinkled upon it, that he immediately mounted his horse, and went forward on his journey.

In the second book he recounts several miracles wrought by St. *Benedict*, founder of the *Benedictin* order of monks, from the testimony of four of that Saint's disciples. I shall mention but two instances. c. 7. *Placidus*, a disciple of St. *Benedict*, being sent to fetch water, fell in, and was carried away, by the stream, to a considerable distance from the bank. The man of God, being in his cell, knew, by divine revelation, what had happened; and calling *Maurus*, another of his disciples, said: Run brother *Maurus*,

rus, the boy, who was sent to draw water, is fallen in, and carried away by the stream. *Maurus*, having received the father's blessing, ran in great haste, and did not stop till he came up to *Placidus*, whom he drew out by the hair of his head, never so much as reflecting that he walked upon the water, till he returned to the bank: and then recollecting himself, he saw, with astonishment, what he had done. C. 32. On another occasion, a certain person brought his dead child to the Saint, begging that he would raise him to life again. The holy man excused himself, saying, that such works were too great for him to attempt. But the afflicted father did not cease importuning, till the Saint being overcome at last, knelt down and leaned on the corpse of the child: then rising up, with his hands stretched out towards heaven he said: O Lord, look not on my sins, but on the faith of this man, who begs that this child may be raised from the dead, and restore to this body the soul which has left it. He had scarce ended this prayer, when the child came to life, whom he took by the hand, and restored to his father in perfect health.

I shall only add one miracle more, which St. *Gregory* declares was wrought upon himself by a venerable monk called *Eleutherius*. L. 3. c. xxxiii.
‘ I myself, says he, experienced the efficacy of his prayers: for being once grievously afflicted with repeated faintings, I was under a necessity of taking something very often by way of refreshment. Holy saturday came, the eve of Easter-sunday, on which day all, even the children, keep fast. I was very much troubled, because my infirmity rendered me incapable of keeping the

the fast with the rest. But I bethought myself of applying to the man of God, to intreat him to pray for me, that I might be strengthened to fast on that day: which was done. For as soon as we entered together into the chapel, he addressed his prayers to God with tears, and having made an end, gave me his blessing; upon which I found myself so much strengthened that I forgot my sickness and my want of refreshment. I was amazed to find such a change in myself. And when evening came I found myself so strong, that I could have continued my fast till the next day.'

These few instances may suffice, out of the many wonderful works, which this great and good Pope relates to have been done by the servants of God. Middleton indeed calls them *trifling and despicable fables*, contrived chiefly to advance the honour of monkery, the worship of Saints and of the Blessed Virgin, the belief of a purgatory, and the divine effects of holy water [1]. But the opinion of St. *Gregory's* wisdom and veracity is too well established to be overthrown by such groundless and scandalous assertions. The method which he observed in writing those dialogues is very commendable: he names his authors from whom he received his informations, who were men of known virtue and probity, and had either been eye-witnesses themselves, or had been favoured with the best opportunities of knowing the truth of what they related.

To the pastoral care of this holy Pope we are indebted for our Christianity, which he planted among our *Saxon* ancestors, by sending St. Au-

[1] *Introd. lxxix.*

gustin a monk, with several others, to preach the gospel here; on which account he is deservedly styled the *Apostle of the English*; among whom his memory ought to be held in veneration. The Missionaries sent by him arrived in Kent at the end of the sixth century, where they began to preach the faith of Christ, and proved their doctrine to be true, by working many evident miracles in confirmation of it.

Venerable Bede in his history l. 2. c. 2. mentions one instance, which is, that St. *Augustin* by his prayers restored sight to a blind man, in the presence of a numerous assembly. The Pope, who was no less watchful for the spiritual welfare of the priests, whom he had sent, than for the conversion of the infidel *Saxons*, being informed of these wonderful works, wrote a letter to St. *Augustin* expressly on this subject of miracles, exhorting him to be very careful in preserving the virtue of humility, amidst the great and wonderful works which God wrought by his hands, and to consider the nature and end of such miraculous gifts, in a true light, as being imparted to him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the people to whom he was sent. ‘ I know, says he, that almighty God ‘ shews forth great miracles, by your hands, in ‘ the nation which he hath been pleased to add ‘ to his chosen people. For which reason it is ‘ necessary, that your joy for that heavenly gift ‘ be moderated with fear, and that your fear be ‘ tempered with joy. Rejoice for that the souls ‘ of the English are, by the means of outward ‘ miracles brought to a participation of inward ‘ grace. But fear, lest amidst the wonders that ‘ are wrought, the mind which is but weak, ‘ should be puffed up to presumption, and incur ‘ the

the inward guilt of vain glory, on account of that exterior honour. We ought to bear in mind, that, when the disciples returned with joy from preaching, and said to their heavenly master, *Lord the devils are subject to us in thy name*, they immediately received this answer: *Rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* L. ix. Epis. 58.

St. Eligius or Eloy, bishop of Noyon St. Eloy, in France, planted the gospel in several parts of Flanders, about the middle of the seventh century, and was favoured with the gift of miracles, as is attested by St. Owen, bishop of Rouen, who was his intimate friend, and wrote his life, in which he gives a particular account of many signal miracles wrought by him, in restoring sight to the blind, strength to the weak and lame, and curing the most inveterate diseases, by the sign of crosses, by holy water, and by blessed oil. He was illustrious also for the gift of prophecy; under which head St. Owen mentions some instances, which had been fulfilled in part when he wrote the account, and which were afterwards accomplished to the full, as the Saint had foretold.

Venerable Bede, flourished in the eighth century, and by his piety, learning, and labours adorned not only this his native country, but the whole Church of God. In his life of St. Cuthbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, he relates many great miracles wrought by that faithful servant of God; the truth of which he assures us, he had carefully examined into, and had been fully satisfied by persons of undoubted veracity, who were intimately acquainted with the Saint, and had been eye-witnesses of his holy life and of the wonderful works wrought by his hands.

Venerable
Bede.

hands. And in his ecclesiastical history of the English nation l. 4. he adds some other miracles wrought by his intercession, after his death. c. 32. He gives a particular instance of one who was suddenly cured of a violent swelling in his eyelid, by applying to it some of the Saints hair, which had been cut off, when his body was taken up and found uncorrupted several years after his burial. This miracle happened but three years before this account was written by St *Bede*, who was informed of it by the very person on whom it was wrought.

The same venerable author, in his ecclesiastical history l. 5. recounts some miracles wrought by St. *John of Beverly*, who died an. 721. As, how he cured a dumb man by the sign of the cross; and delivered a certain Earl's wife from a grievous sickness by some of the holy water which he had blessed for the consecration of a Church; with other wonderful works which were attested to him, by eye-witnesses, persons of the strictest probity, then actually living, and ready to confirm the same.

In the same age, Christianity was planted and greatly propagated among the *Frisons*, by St. *Wilbrord alias Clement*, archbishop of *Utrecht*; and in other parts of *Germany* by St. *Winfrid, alias Boniface*, martyr, both Englishmen, who, by their preaching and miracles, converted great numbers to the faith of Christ. The learned *Alcuin*, who wrote the life of St. *Wilbrord*, says, that, in his time, many wonderful works were done at his reliques, and many infirm persons cured by anointing themselves with the oil of the lamp, which was kept burning before his shrine.

Stephen

Stephen of Byzantium, in his narrative of the sufferings of St. Stephen a monk, who, for defending the lawful use of images, was put to death an.

Stephen
Byzan-
tium.

767, under *Constantin Copronymus*, the *Iconoclast* or image-breaker, says, that he was favoured with the gift of miracles, which was the occasion that great numbers of people resorted to him. Among others came a blind man, begging earnestly to have his sight restored. The Saint endeavoured to excuse himself; but to no purpose; the blind man still persisting in his petition. Therefore he said to him. Hast thou faith? Dost thou honour the images of *Jesus Christ*, of his mother, and of the Saints? Dost thou believe in God who works miracles of healing by images. To which the blind man having answered in the affirmative, St. Stephen said: In the name of *Jesus Christ* who cured the blind, in whom thou believest, whom thou adorest in his image, look up at the Sun. And that instant his eyes were opened. This account was written forty two years after his martyrdom, according to informations given by the companions and disciples of the Saint, most of whom were then living.

In the ninth century, flourished many, St. Nicetas
eminent Saints, celebrated for the gift and others.
of miracles. St. Nicetas, abbot, as we are informed by his disciple *Theoferus*, delivered several possessed persons, by prayer; many also, who had lost the use of reason, were restored by him to their perfect senses. The same disciple was present at his interment, and attests that then, and afterwards, miracles were wrought at his tomb.

St.

St. *Plato*, St. *Theodore*, and St. *Nicolas* the *Studites* were illustrious, in the same age, for miracles, and the gift of prophecy; of which several circumstantial accounts are left on record.

St. *Ignatius*, patriarch of *Constantinople*, was favoured with many extraordinary graces. While he was offering the holy sacrifice of mass, the consecrated host was seen to dart forth bright rays of light; and at his burial many evident miracles were wrought in the presence of the whole people.

St. *Dunstan* In the tenth century St. *Dunstan* archbishop of *Canterbury* wrought many miracles, was favoured with divine illuminations, and expressly foretold that God would, shortly after, pour forth his judgments on the *English* nation by an inundation of barbarians, which was fully accomplished by the *Danes*.

St. *Nilus*. In the same age St. *Nilus* abbot was celebrated through the Eastern and Western Churches, for his singular virtues and miraculous powers; of which several instances may be seen in his life written by one of his disciples.

Thus we are come down to the end of the tenth century: during which period of time, there are many more instances of the same nature, which occur in every age. These few which are here offered to the reader's consideration, few as they are, will be sufficient to convince every unbiased person, that the miraculous powers never were totally withdrawn from the Church; but that God did, through these successive ages, raise up, from time to time, some extraordinary men, whom he vested with extraordinary powers, for the support of his Church, and for other great ends.

P A R T IV.

In which it is proved, that the same powers have subsisted in the Church, from the eleventh century down to the present time. The whole is concluded with some reflections on the interesting consequences, which are evidently deducible from the facts related in the body of this treatise.

§ I.

IN the eleventh century we have many Saints, who by their heroic virtues and wonderful works adorned the Church of God, *viz.* St. Henry, emperour of *Germany*; St. Edward the Confessor, king of *England*; St. Margaret, queen of *Scotland*; St. Stephen, king of *Hungary*; St. Bruno, founder of the *Cartbusians*; St. Romuald, founder of the monks of *Camaldoli*, St. Odilo, abbot of *Cluny*; St. Arnulph, bishop of *Soiffons*; St. Anjelm, archbishop of *Canterbury*; and many others. For brevity's sake I shall pass over all the rest, and select only a passage or two from the life of the venerable prelate last mentioned.

The

The writer of St *Anselm's* life is *Eadmer*, one of his companions, a man of judgment and probity, who was himself a witness to some of the wonderful works which he relates, and had been informed of others by persons who were capable of giving sufficient evidence, and worthy to be believed. How careful he was to affirm nothing, without proper vouchers, will appear from the following passage.

‘ When we were going out of the ship, says he, the mariners stopped *Baldwin*, who was *Anselm's* steward of the household, and shewed him a wonderful thing which had happened. At the bottom of the vessel a plank was broken, so that there was a hole of near two feet extent, through which the water had never entered, while the Saint was on board. *Baldwin* ordered them to conceal the matter carefully; so it was not known to many at that time. I had some little knowledge of it then: but afterwards, having undertaken to write this account, and being resolved to relate nothing which might be liable to the least doubt; I put the question to the same *Baldwin*, and pressed him to let me know the whole truth. Upon which, with a solemn asseveration, he assured me, that the fact was literally true, as I have related it.’

When this holy prelate resided at *Lyons*, the scraps from his table were kept as remedies against sickness: ‘ And not without reason, says my author, for I know that some were perfectly and instantly cured of fevers and other infirmities by eating the leavings of his meat. For instance, on the feast of St. *Maurice*, which is kept with great solemnity at *Vienne*, *Anselm* went

St. Anselm
A. B. of
Canterbury

went thither, at the request of *Guy*, archbishop of the city ; and said mass, and preached to the people. Afterwards, when he was set down to table, two sick men came in, begging that he would give them some crumbs of his bread. He excused himself, alledging that they did not seem to want bread ; but that if they pleased, they might sit down to table, and, with the blessing of God, eat what was set before them. They answered, that was not their design in coming thither. Neither will I, replied he, do any thing more. For he knew what their design was. Therefore one, who sat at his right hand, perceiving that they sought to be cured, and knowing that the holy man was very averse from doing any thing which might bear the appearance of a miracle, made a shew of being wearied with their importunities, and giving them some fragments off the table, bid them depart. They tasted a little, and having received his blessing, went out. After dinner they took me aside, and begged earnestly that, by my assistance, they might be admitted to receive the body and blood of our Lord, from the hand of *Anselm*, when he said mass. I told them at what time and in what place they might do it. They assured me, with many thanks that they would not fail to come, in case they were not delivered, by the fragments which they had received, from the quartan agues and twisting of the bowels with which they were afflicted. And this, said they, shall be the sign between us : If we are cured, we will not come : if we do not come, you may be assured that we are recovered. Having said this, they went away ; and returned no more : for, as I was informed by persons

‘ persons, who knew them both, they were perfectly cured.’

‘ A nobleman of that country who languished under the same kind of disorder, having learnt that *Anselm* was to say mass in the Church of St. *Stephen*, hastened thither; hoping that it would help towards his recovery, if he could but have the happiness of being present, when so good a man said mass. We saw the man come into the Church, supported by his attendants, more like a corpse than a living man. He sat down, and after mass was ended, went away. But we neither knew nor inquired who he was, or whence, or why he came. After a few days, the same man came to the prelate, and returned him thanks on his knees, for the recovery of his health. The Saint was astonished; but the nobleman related to him all that had happened, attesting that from the time when he was present at his mass, he had been entirely freed from his former disorder.’

‘ It fell out one day, that when St. *Anselm*, after having said mass, was alone in the oratory, at prayer, according to his custom; a certain man, who guided himself with a staff, came with a design of entering into the oratory. *Alexander* our brother and companion, a monk of the Church of *Canterbury*, was then waiting at the door for the Saint’s coming out: he, seeing that the man was desirous to go in, stopped him, and asked his business. The man answered in a sorrowful tone of voice, that he had lost his eye sight; and desired the man of God would lay his hands upon him, trusting that he should find relief from his holy merits. The Saint hearing his cries, but not distinguishing

ing his words, called to brother *Alexander*, to know the meaning of it. Whereupon he told him, there was a poor blind man at the door who desired he would make the sign of the cross upon him. The Saint ordered that he should come in, and made the sign of the cross over his eyes, saying: *May the power of the cross of Christ give light to thy eyes, and drive from them all weakness, and render them perfectly sound.* Then sprinkling him with holy water, he dismissed him. Brother *Alexander* led him out, and told him, that if he found no relief by what was already done, he might come again next morning, and promised that the same should be done to him again. But he answered; I shall have no occasion to come again; for by the favour of God and of his faithful servant, I see perfectly well. This I have related in the very words of *Alexander*, who attests that he was present. Several other miracles are related by the same author, of whose knowledge, judgment and veracity there is not the least reason to doubt.

§. 2. The brightest ornament of the twelfth century was the great St. *Bernard*. *Bernard* abbot of *Clairvaux* who does not only bear witness to the working of miracles by others, but was himself gifted with the same extraordinary powers. He was intimately acquainted with St. *Malachy*, Primate of *Ireland*, whose life he wrote, in which he gives an account of several evident miracles wrought by him. I shall only mention one fact which was done at the burial of the Saint at *Clairvaux*, where he died. Every thing, says St. *Bernard*, was made ready for the funeral: the sacrifice was offered up for him, all the ceremonies were performed with

‘ great devotion ; when I observed that there stood, at some distance, a youth whose arm was withered, and hung down at his side, entirely useles. I beckoned to him to come near, and taking hold of his withered hand, laid it on the hand of St. Malacky, and it was restored to life. The grace of healing remained in him after he was dead : and his hand had the same effect on a withered hand, as Eliseus had on a dead man.’ Every thing concurs to render this fact indisputable : the character of St. Bernard who attests it not only as an eye-witness, but even as an agent in it ; and his publishing of it to the world shortly after, when, if there had been any forgery in the relation, it might have been detected by numbers who were present at the Saint’s funeral, and were capable of distinguishing what was done before their eyes. These considerations, I say, leave no room to doubt the reality of this miracle.

But let us pass on to the miracles wrought by St. Bernard himself, who was vested with these extraordinary powers in so eminent a degree, that he is called by some the *Thaumaturgus* or *Wonderworker* of the West, as St. Gregory was of the East. *Geoffrey* one of his disciples, who was, some time, his Secretary, and accompanied him in many of his journeys, wrote his life, in the preface to which he says : ‘ I was present at almost all the transactions, which I relate : some few things, to which I was not an eye-witness, have been attested to me by brethren who were present, on whose veracity I can depend’. I shall select but one or two passages, out of this writer. Such as are desirous of a more ample account, may consult the original,

nal, in which they will find every thing, that is requisite to give entire satisfaction.

In this century, the neighbourhood of *Toulouse* was very much infected with heresy. *Henry*, an apostate monk, disciple and successor of *Peter de Bruis*, had ingratiated himself with the people, by his invectives against the clergy, which is commonly the first step towards a defection from the Church. Having thus poisoned the minds of the flock against their pastors, he more easily instilled into them his own heterodox opinions, teaching them, *to refuse baptism to infants, to decry prayers and oblations for the dead, and the invocation of Saints, to condemn the authority of the Church and its priests, and all ecclesiastical ordinances &c.* To remedy this disorder, *Alberick*, bishop of *Ostia*, was sent by the Pope, as his legate into those parts. He was thoroughly acquainted with the merit of *St. Bernard*, whom, for that reason, he persuaded to accompany him in this journey, on the success of which depended the salvation of so many souls. In this mission, the blessed man, by his discourses and many evident miracles, animated the faithful, confirmed the wavering, and brought back great numbers who had been seduced.

‘ There is in that country, says my historian, ‘ a place called *Sarlat*, where, after the sermon ‘ was ended, they brought many loaves of bread, ‘ to be blessed by the man of God, as was every ‘ where the custom. He made the sign of the ‘ cross over them, blessing them in the name of ‘ God; and then said: *By this shall you know the truth of our doctrine, and the falsehood of that which is taught by the hereticks, if such as are sick among you, recover their health by tasting these*

' loaves. Geoffrey the venerable bishop of *Chartres*, who stood near the Saint, being fearful
 ' for the event, said: *That is, if they taste with*
 ' *a right faith, they shall be cured.* But the holy
 ' Father not doubting the power of God, re-
 ' plied: *I say not so: But, for a certainty, they*
 ' *that taste shall be cured: that they may know by*
 ' *this that we are sent of God, and preach the truth.*
 ' And so great a multitude of sick persons were
 ' cured by tasting that bread, that the fame
 ' thereof went through the whole country; and
 ' the man of God, when he came near that
 ' neighbourhood, on his return, was obliged to
 ' go out of the way, and take another road, being
 ' afraid to go to the same place, on account of the
 ' prodigious concourse of people' [1].

In the city of *Toulouse*, the Saint, with his
 companions, of whom my author was one, lodg-
 ed at *St. Saturnin's*, a house of canons regular.
 It happened that one of the canons lay at the
 point of death, having been ill seven months,
 an dbeing so emaciated and weakened, that he
 could not rise from his bed, even on the most
 necessary occasions. In this condition, he was
 ' visited by the blessed man, to whom he con-
 ' fessed his sins, and then begged, earnestly, to
 ' be restored to health. The Saint gave him his
 ' blessing and left the chamber, and we went out
 ' with him. As he was going away, he prayed
 ' to himself, in these words, as he owned to us
 ' afterwards: *O Lord why dost thou delay: this*
 ' *people lookeith for miracles; and unless our words*
 ' *are confirmed by signs that follow, we make no pro-*
 ' *gress among them.* That instant the sick man
 ' rose from his bed, and following after, over-

[1] *Gauf. 1. 8. c. 6.*

took

took us, and kissed the blessed man's feet, with that eager devotion which is not to be imagined, but by those who saw it. This fact being noised abroad, many people ran to see with their own eyes: among the rest, came the bishop of the place, and the Pope's legate. They all went to the Church, the man who had been restored to health leading the way; where they gave thanks to God, for this signal blessing, which served to the confirmation of the true faith, and to the confusion of heresy [1]. This canon became a monk at *Clairvaux*, from whence being sent back into the territory of *Toulouse*, he was elected abbot of *Valdeau*, which place he held when this account was written.

I saw, says the same historian, a certain militiaman, at *Meaux*, returning hearty thanks to the Saint, for that, as soon as he had tasted some bread blessed by him, he had been delivered from a quartan ague with which he had been afflicted near eighteen months, to such a degree, that, when the fit came on, he was like one distracted, and did not know even his nearest friends. And *Gerard*, the venerable bishop of *Limoges*, attested to me, that a young man of his family, having received a mortal wound in his head, and lying out of his senses, was suddenly cured, by having a morsel of bread, which the Saint had blessed, put into his mouth. See book 4, chap. 4.

The following chapters of the same book contain an account of many miracles which he wrought, at *Constance*, at *Basil*, at *Spire*, at *Co-*

[1]. *Gauf.* l. 3. c. 6. et in *Epis.*

logn, at *Liege* and divers other places. Wherever he went, multitudes of people flocked together, from all parts, and brought their sick, their lame, their blind &c that he might lay his hands upon them. Upon which occasions, the concourse was oftentimes so great, that it was not without the utmost difficulty, that he could be withdrawn from the crowd. ‘ In the city of *Spire*, says the historian, a lame boy was brought to him, whom he blessed with the sign of the cross, and raised up perfectly cured, in the presence of *Conrad*, king of the Romans. In the bishop’s chapel, the king being present and looking on, he gave sight to a blind woman, and the power of walking to one who was born lame. The king himself, with his own hands, presented some poor children to him, and had the happiness to see many cured. Nor was this city the only one which was favoured with miracles: the same wonderful works were renewed at *Franckfort*. All the infirm people of the neighbouring country were brought to him; and so great was the concourse, that once the king, not being able to restrain their eagerness, took up the man of God in his arms, and carried him out of the Church.

The sixth book is one continued narrative of the miracles wrought by the same Saint, in the several places to which he went, for the publick utility of the Church. The reality of each fact is supported by proper witnesses, who say: ‘ We that were present have judged it necessary to specify the miracles, as well to avoid confusion, as to remove all doubt. We have each of us signed our names, and do solemnly attest what we have seen and heard. Now the persons

‘ persons who accompanied him (to *Constance*)
‘ were; *John Herman* bishop of *Constance*, and
‘ *Everard* my chaplain: two abbots, *Baldwin*
‘ and *Frowin*: two monks, *Gerard* and *Geoffrey*:
‘ three clergymen, *Philip* archdeacon of *Liege*,
‘ *Otto* and *Franco*. chap. 1.’

The method which is observed in relating the miracles, is this: each of them attest what they had seen or been informed of, day by day, during the time that they were in the blessed man’s company.

‘ *Herman, bishop*. A priest of the village of
‘ *Herenheim*, whom I interrogated about the matter, assured me, that one of his family, who
‘ had been blind ten years, having received the
‘ sign of the cross, as we passed that way, on
‘ the first sunday of Advent, had his sight instantaneously restored, as soon as he returned home.
‘ I had been informed of this before, by another
‘ person; and the thing is known for a certainty
‘ all over the country.’

‘ *Everard*. I was informed by two men of credit, the one a priest, the other a monk, that
‘ two blind men received sight, in the village
‘ of *Lapenheim*, by the sign of the cross, that
‘ same day.

‘ *Philip*. On monday, an old blind man was
‘ led into the Church, in my presence; and after
‘ the servant of God had laid his hands upon
‘ him, you all heard the acclamations of the
‘ people on his being cured.

‘ *Frowin, abbot*. I saw that man, after his
‘ sight was restored, and so did brother *Geoffrey*.

‘ *Franco*. On tuesday, at *Frienburg*, a mother brought a blind child, early in the morning, to our lodgings. The man of God laid

‘ his hands upon him, and as she was leading him away, he ordered that somebody should inquire of the boy whether he could see now, or not; I followed her myself, and asked the child, who told me that he saw perfectly, which was also proved to be true by several experiments.

‘ *Geoffrey*. At our first entrance into the Church, a youth who was lame was enabled, by the virtue of the sign of the cross, to walk firmly.

‘ *Herman, bishop*. We all saw him before the altar, when the people with great acclamations, gave praise to God.

‘ *Everard*. That same day, I saw three lame men cured.

‘ *Franco*. You all saw the blind woman who was cured at the entrance of the Church, and shewed to the people.

‘ *Geoffrey* and also the girl whose withered hand was made sound.

‘ *Gerard*. The same day I saw a blind boy cured.

‘ *Otto*. On wednesday, the blessed man, after mass, touched a womans withered hands, and cured them: you all heard the acclamations. *Franco* and I saw her hands.

‘ *Geoffrey*. When he was going out of the village he cured a boy’s hand, in the presence of us all. A lame woman also, not being able to overtake us, the Father ordered *Henry*, one of our company, to go back, and bring her upon his horse. When she was brought to us, he cured her before our eyes: in the same place, a girl, who had been lame from her birth,

birth, was enabled to walk : and they both went from us on foot.

‘*Frano.* On the road, he cured a girl’s withered hand. I myself gave her the Abbot’s staff to try whether she could hold it, and she held it with a strong grasp, &c.’ It were endless to mention all : the few lines, which I have here transcribed, for the reader’s satisfaction, may serve as a specimen of the rest.

Now, with regard to these miracles of St. *Bernard*, it is worth while to observe, first, that they were not done in a corner, without witnesses, but, publickly and in the face of the world, in the presence of multitudes, not only of the lower class of people, but also of persons of the first rank both in Church and state ; prelates with their clergy, and princes with their courtiers, all looking on and seeing, with astonishment, the wonderful works of the blessed man, and all confessing that the hand of God was with him.

Secondly, it is worthy to be noticed, that these miracles of his are related with all the circumstances which may conduce to satisfy the most scrupulous inquirer. The names of the witnesses and other persons concerned, the time and the place are all recorded ; and were published to the world, at a time when there were thousands of persons living, who, if there had been any forgery in the matter, must necessarily have had it in their power to detect the fraud, to the utter confusion of the publishers.

Thirdly, another circumstance, which shews the reality of these miracles to be indisputable, is, that some of them were wrought for the conviction of hereticks, and declared to be wrought for that end, and insisted upon as demonstrative proofs

proofs, in favour of the catholick religion, and in condemnation of the opposite errors. Now, we may be assured, that the hereticks would leave no stone unturned, in order to prevent the influence of so striking an argument. If the miracles were real, they could not help seeing that their own doctrine must of necessity be false, when heaven itself concurred, in so visible a manner, to the confutation of it. Therefore, it was incumbent on them, in the first place, to make it appear, that the miracles were not real ones, that they were the result of fraud and imposture, and not the effects of a divine interposition. We need not doubt but they would have done this, if it had been in their power: it would have raised the credit of their own party, and have exposed the catholick preachers to shame and confusion. But they never did it. The miracles were wrought in the face of the world: enemies as well as friends were at liberty to be witnesses to them: they were publickly appealed to, as marks of a divine approbation given to such practices and principles as were maintained by Catholicks: and though the hereticks did, no doubt, set their wits to work to canvass them every way, yet they stood the test, and were never disproved.

§ 3. In the thirteenth century were founded the two religious orders of *Dominicans* and *Franciscans*, by S. *Dominick*, and St. *Francis of Assisium*, each of them eminent for sanctity and the grace of miracles, and each of them succeeded by numerous disciples, whose rare virtues proved them to be worthy children of such illustrious Fathers.

St. Dominick.

Concerning St. *Dominick* the learned *Bellarmin* observes, that, though his life had not then been written with sufficient

sufficient care, yet it is known for certain, that three dead persons were raised to life by him. One of these miracles was wrought at *Rome*, where the Pope had deputed St. *Dominick*, together with three Cardinals, *Hugolin*, *Stephen*, and *Nicolas*, to deliberate about the uniting of the religious women of that city. A proper reformation being agreed upon for the convent of our blessed Lady beyond *Tiber*, the Saint with the three Cardinals, and the abbess with all her nuns, were assembled together for the ratifying of it; ‘when on a sudden, while they were in the chapter-house, there came a person, tearing his hair, and making great lamentation, crying out that *Napoleon*, Cardinal *Stephen*’s nephew, was thrown from his horse and killed. The man of God went to the place where the dead body lay, which he ordered to be carried into a house, and then bid brother *Tancred* and others to make an altar ready, that he might say mass. The Cardinals with their attendants, and the abbess with her nuns, all went to the place, where the man of God was going to sacrifice the victim of salvation. Being at the altar, he shed a flood of tears, and while he elevated the body of Christ in his pure hands, he was himself lifted up a whole cubit from the ground, in the sight, and to the great amazement of all who were present. The sacrifice being ended, the blessed man went to the corpse, to implore the mercy of God, being followed by all the company: and standing by the body, he disposed the bruised limbs in their proper places; and then betook himself to prayer. Having done so thrice, he rose up, and made the sign of the cross over him: then lifting up his hands to heaven

‘heaven, he himself being at the same time raised from the ground by the power of God, and suspended in the air, cried out with a loud voice: *Napoleon, I say to thee in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise.* That instant, in the sight of the whole multitude, he arose sound and whole.’

I shall say nothing of the other miracles wrought by this Saint, during his life, nor of those which were done by his intercession, after his passage out of this world. They were thoroughly discussed, and fully proved, by the depositions of many eye witnesses, in order for his canonization, which was decreed twelve years after his death.

St. Francis of Assisium is written by St. Bonaventure, one of the great lights of that century, who, in

his preface to it, assures us, that he took all the necessary steps to ascertain the facts which he relates. ‘In order, says he, to acquire more certainty and evidence of the truth, I went to the place where the blessed man was born, where he lived, and where he died. I made frequent and exact inquiries, of his familiar friends who were still alive, concerning the transactions of his life, and above all, of some who were his principal followers, and thoroughly acquainted with his merits, whose testimony may be depended on, without hesitation; because they knew the truth, and were men of approved virtue.’

By the informations which he received from these witnesses, it appears, that this Saint was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and the grace of healing the sick, and of casting out devils.

‘When

When the blessed man, says my author, lay ill at *Reate* there was a certain prebendary called *Gideon*, who was afflicted with a violent disease, at the same time. This man got himself carried to the Saint, and begged earnestly that he would make the sign of the cross over him. Now he had hitherto led but a very disorderly life; for which reason St. *Francis* said to him: Seeing that you have lived, till this time, according to the ways of the flesh, without any fear of the judgments of God, how shall I make the sign of the cross over you? Nevertheless, for the sake of these who intercede for you, I will sign you in the name of the Lord. But do you take notice then, that in case you return to your former evil ways after your deliverance, a worse calamity shall befall you: for the sin of ingratitude always brings after it more dreadful judgments. Having said this, he made the sign of the cross over him; and that instant, he arose in perfect health, and cried out, *I am delivered.* After some time, he thought no more of God, but returned to his accustomed crimes: and being, one night, in the house of another prebendary, with whom he had supped, he was suddenly killed by the falling in of the house top, though all the rest of the company escaped with their lives.

In the city of *Narni*, says the same writer, he made the sign of the cross, at the request of the bishop, over a certain paralitick, who had lost the use of all his limbs, and made him perfectly sound and strong. In the castle of *Menavi* a girl having lost her eye-sight, he touched her eyes thrice, with his spittle, in

the

‘ the name of the blessed Trinity, and she was
‘ cured.’

Many other signal miracles are related by St. *Bonaventure*, in his life of this great servant of God. But the most wonderful thing of all is, that, two years before his death, he received in a miraculous manner, in his own body, the marks of our Redeemer’s crucifixion, so that his hands and feet appeared pierced with long nails, and his side opened as if it were with a lance. ‘ This was seen, says St. *Bonaventure*, by several brethren while he was alive, who also attested the truth of it upon oath: not but that their word alone was sufficient to have obtained belief; but this they did, in order that all doubt might the more effectually be excluded. The same was seen by some of his familiar friends among the Cardinals, who bore witness to the truth of it, both by word and writing. And Pope *Alexander*, when he was preaching to the people, declared in my hearing, and in that of several brethren, that he had seen those marks with his own eyes, while the Saint was living. At his death it was seen by above fifty brethren, and by St. *Clare*, and her religious sisters, and by a great number of others; many of whom, for greater certainty, touched the marks with their hands.’

Numberless were the miracles, which were wrought by his intercession, after his death: insomuch that Pope *Gregory IX.* ordered, that they should be thoroughly examined; the management of which business he committed to some of the Cardinals, who seemed least favourable to the cause. Witnesses were heard, the miracles were discussed with all imaginable care, and found to be

be indisputably true ; in consequence of which, it was resolved to proceed to his canonization two years after his decease.

Three years after the canonization of St. *Francis*, died St. *Antony of Padua*, one of his disciples, who was himself canonized the year following, the reality of his miracles being fully ascertained by the depositions of many unquestionable witnesses, who were examined by the bishop of *Padua*, and two superiors of the *Dominican* order, commissioned for that end by Pope *Gregory IX*, as is declared in the diploma of his canonization.

In this century, was founded also the religious order of *our Lady of mercy*, for the redemption of captives, by St. *Peter Nolasco*, St. *Raymund of Penafort*, and *James*, king of *Arragon* ; who were all three encouraged to prosecute this undertaking by the blessed Virgin who appeared to each of them in a vision, as is mentioned by St. *Raymund* himself in a letter which is quoted by *Touron* in his life of the Saint.

In the same age, several eminent prelates adorned the Church of God in this kingdom, *viz.* St. *Edmund of Canterbury*, St. *Hugh of Lincoln*, St. *Richard of Chichester*, St. *Thomas of Hereford*, by whom many evident miracles were wrought while they were living, and at their reliques, after their death ; as is attested by writers of undoubted credit.

I pass over other illustrious Saints of the same century, by whose hands it pleased God to work incontestible miracles, *viz.* St. *Hyacinth*, St. *Clare*, St. *Elizabeth*, St. *Thomas Aquinas*, St. *Bonaventure*, St. *Peter of Milan*, martyr, and many more, whose admirable virtues and wonderful works are recorded in authentick monuments.

St. Catharine of Siena. §. 4. In the fourteenth century, we have an illustrious instance, of the continuance of miraculous gifts, in the person of St. *Catbarine of Siena*. Her confessarius the reverend father *Raymund*, General of the *Dominican* order, a man of learning and probity, wrote her life, in which he candidly acknowledges, that for a long time, he doubted the reality of the heavenly visions and other favours which she received from God; till having maturely examined them, and experienced, in himself, the wonderful efficacy of her prayers, he was fully satisfied, and therefore in the presence of God, avers the truth of what he relates.

I shall but just mention some few of the facts, which he attests. First, a certain *Dominican* friar, named *John*, having broken a vein, and vomited so much blood, that his life was despaired of, was instantly cured by the touch of her hand, in the presence of father *Thomas* her first confessarius, and several others. Secondly. About the year 1374, when a pestilence raged at *Siena* father *Raymund* himself, and his companion, having contracted the infection, by assisting the sick, were both of them perfectly restored by her prayers, as were likewise many others, of whom mention is made in her life. Thirdly. At *Pisa* a young man of about twenty years of age, who was reduced to a very weak condition by a fever, which had afflicted him for eighteen months, being brought to her, that she might pray to God for him; she first asked him, how long it was since he had last confessed his sins: he owned, that he had not done it for some years: That is the reason, said she, why you are punished in this

this manner. Go speedily to a confessarius, and disburthen your conscience. He made his confession to Father *Thomas*, and then came back to the Saint, who laid her hand on his shoulder, and said: Depart in the peace of Christ, you shall suffer no more from this fever. She had no sooner uttered these words, but he was restored to perfect health. Father *Raymund*, with others, was an eye-witness to this miracle. Fourthly. The same father attests, that she often told him the most secret thoughts which passed in his mind; and that she foretold the great schism, which began, in the Church, under Pope Urban vi. and that he, viz. father *Raymund*, should live to see it.

In the same age St. *Andrew Corsini*, was vested with the gifts of prophecy and miracles. The like extraordinary powers were granted, also to St. *Ivo*, St. *Elzear*, St. *Rock*, St. *Catharine of Sweden*, St. *Bridget*, St. *Juliana de Falconeriis*, St. *John Columbin*, and many others, as may be seen in the histories of their lives.

§ 5. The beginning of the fifteenth century was enlightened by the apostolic labours and miracles of St. *Vincent Ferrerius*.

Ferrerius, native of *Valentia* in *Spain*. He preached the gospel, with wonderful success, to the *Saracens* and *Jews* in that kingdom: he passed through the greatest part of *Italy*, the islands of *Majorca* and *Minorca*, almost all the provinces of *France*, and through *England* *Scotland* and *Ireland*, every where exhorting sinners to repent, and to fly from the wrath to come. To all these different nations, he preached in his own mother tongue; and nevertheless, by a particular gift of God,

S was

was as perfectly understood by them, as if he had spoken to each in their own language. He was favoured with the gift of prophecy and divine revelations, by which he foretold many things to come, discovered the most hidden secrets, and transactions which were carried on at a great distance from him. He cured many sick persons by prayer and the sign of the croſs, on which occasions he used theſe words. *These signs ſhall follow them that believe; they ſhall lay their hands upon the ſick, and they ſhall recover: Jesus, the ſon of Mary, the Saviour and Lord of the world, who hath brought thee to the catholick faith, may he keep thee in it, and make thee happy, and deliver thee from this infirmity. Amen.* At Barcelona, a certain woman brought to him a little infant, which had a rupture, intreating that he would make the sign of the croſs over it. The bleſſed man ſaid to her. ‘ Rejoice daughter; this child ſhall ſoon be cured, and, when he is grown up, ſhall be choſen into the number of the clergy, and become an eminent divine’. Having ſaid ſo, he laid his hand on the child, and he was healed that instant. And if any one, ſays my author, father Ranzani, desires farther ſatisfaction, his name is John Solerius, he is now living, and is highly eſteemed by Alphonsus king of Arragon, on account of his extraordinary erudition.

To mention all the wonderful works which are recorded of this great Saint, were endleſs: let it ſuffice to obſerve, that he was canonized about the middle of the ſame century by Pope Calixtus iii. to whom he had foretold at Valentia, above fifty years before, that he ſhould be made Pope. In the proceſs for his canonization, the

miracles,

miracles, which were found to be supported by convincing testimonies, were in number above eight hundred.

In the same century, flourished St. *Bernardin of Siena*, whose miracles are attested by his disciple and companion

St. Bernardin.

St. *John Capistran*, and by other cotemporary writers, whose authority, as they were men of probity, and intimately acquainted with the Saint, is sufficient to obtain belief from every reasonable man. He was canonized in the year 1450, about six years after his death, by Pope *Nicolas v.* out of whose decree I shall extract a passage or two, that the reader may see what precaution is used on such occasions. ‘ In the time of our predecessor, *Eugenius iv.* so many miracles were reported to have been done, by the merits and intercession of St. *Bernardin*, that the most pressing solicitations were made to the Apostolick see, to have the reality of such miracles inquired into with proper care; to the end that, after the truth was manifested, due honour might be paid, by the Church militant on earth, to him who was proved, by the testimony of God, to reign in glory, in the Church triumphant in heaven. Our predecessor did what was requisite, in a matter of so great importance; and, according to the custom of the Apostolick see, intrusted the business to three Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, who were empowered to send two venerable bishops, with commission to make the most exact researches, in order to discover the truth. After having spent some months in this

‘ work, they returned to *Rome* and gave a faithful account of what they had found’.

‘ But our predecessor being taken out of this world, before that business was ended; and solicitations being made to us, to have it resumed; we resolved to proceed with the utmost care and circumspection. Therefore, we appointed three Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, to send two venerable bishops a second time, to inquire into the truth; that so we might proceed with more security, after this repeated search. Accordingly, they sent two bishops; who, at their return, did not only confirm what had been discovered in the time of our predecessor, but also brought attestations of several evident miracles, which had been wrought since that time. Nevertheless, we did not let this second inquiry suffice, but resolved to make a third; and therefore sent two other venerable bishops, who, after some months, returned with the most convincing proofs, that miracles were frequently wrought; and in particular, they brought an exact narrative of some of the more remarkable ones. After this we sent another bishop to *Siena*, who, having staid there some months, bore witness, at his return, to the truth and reality of the miracles. We sent the same venerable person also to *Aquila*, where the Saint died, to inquire whether any miracles were wrought there. At his return, he confirmed the attestations of others, who had been sent before to the same place; and moreover, related the most stupendous works, which had been done since the time of the inquiry made by those others; which stupendous works were done, not

not in corners and hidden places, but publickly, and in the sight of the whole multitude.

Having received these informations, we caused every particular to be laid open in our confistory, where they were examined. But the matter being of great importance, the determination was put off, till another confistory should be held, that so each Cardinal might, in the mean time, examine every article more maturely at home. In this second confistory, all the votes concurred in this, that the miracles were so many, and so very evident, and the sanctity of the Saint's life, and the purity of his faith so manifest, that there was reason sufficient to proceed to the canonization &c.

Now I would willingly ask any of *Middleton's* admirers, what deficiency they discover in this method of proceeding, to ascertain the existence of miracles. If there is any possibility of coming to the knowledge of them, it must be by such inquiries as are here mentioned. And whatever stands the test of this fiery trial, may be affirmed to be as certain as any thing of that nature possibly can be. To tell us, that all the venerable persons, employed in this scrutiny, were fools or knaves, is but a childish evasion; and whoever makes use of such an answer, when he cannot prove what he says, does but expose his own weakness or malice, and prove himself to be really deserving of those names which he bestows so undeservedly upon others.

I shall say nothing of St. *Laurence Justiniani*, St. *Frances*, St. *Antonin*, St. *Didacus*, St. *Casimir* and other Saints of the same century, through whose merits and intercession incontestable miracles were

wrought, as was fully proved in the inquiries which were made in the process for their canonization.

§ 6. Thus we are come down to the sixteenth century; till which time, as it appears from the short sketch already given, the miraculous powers, so far from being withdrawn from the Church of God, were frequently and openly exerted, in every age. It now remains to be proved, that the same extraordinary powers did not cease at this period.

But first, I must take notice of what Dr. *Middleton* says, concerning the effects of the *reformation*, which took its rise in this century. It must be confessed however says he, that this claim of a miraculous power, which is now peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, was universally asserted and believed in all christian countries, and in all ages of the Church, till the time of the reformation. For ecclesiastical history makes no difference between one age and another; but carries on the succession of its miracles, as of all other common events, through all of them indifferently, to that memorable period. But the light of the reformation dispelled the charm: and what *Cicero* says of the *Pythian* oracle, may be as truly said of the Popish miracles: *when men began to be less credulous their power vanished*. For that spirit of inquiry, with which Christendom was then animated, detected the cheat, and exposed to public view, the hidden springs and machinery of those lying wonders, by which the world had been seduced and enslaved to the tyranny of *Rome* [1]. Thus the Doctor, without

any manner of scruple, confesses, that the continuance of miracles, in the Church, may be proved by the unanimous testimony of successive historians, through every age, down to the reformation. Now, if the unanimous and consentient testimony of witnesses, is not sufficient, to ascertain the existence of a miraculous fact done two or three hundred years ago ; I cannot conceive how it will be possible to ascertain it at all. For, what other method is there, of coming to the knowledge of the events of past ages, but by recurring to the authority of the writers, who lived in those times, when such events are said to have happened ? As to his remark out of *Cicero* on the *Pythian* oracle, he might have learned from a much better master, that incredulity is capable of putting a stop to real miracles, as well as to forgeries. Of our Saviour it is said, that being in his own country, *he wrought not many miracles there, because of their unbelief* Mat. xiii. 58. So that we need not wonder, why miracles are not wrought in those places, into which such a spirit of incredulity has been introduced by the reformation, that it is well, if it does not shortly end, in a total disbelief of all communication between God and man.

This incredulity however of the reformers hath not destroyed the faith of the Church : she still continues the spouse of Christ, and is still favoured with his most extraordinary gifts and graces. Even in the sixteenth century, when she suffered so much, by the revolt of great numbers of her children, it pleased God to raise up many eminent Saints, no less illustrious than those of former

ages; some of whom, by their good example, their preaching and their miracles, gave a check to the spreading evil of reformation in Christendom, while others carried the gospel into countries before unknown, and brought new nations into the fold of Christ, to fill up the place of those who were not worthy to continue in it.

I shall here insert some few instances, to prove, that the miraculous powers have been exerted by several Saints, who lived in communion with the See of *Rome*, since that unhappy breach made by *Luther*.

St. Francis Xavier. In the sixteenth century was founded the religious order of the *Society of Jesus*, by St. *Ignatius of Loyola* one of whose first and most illustrious disciples, was St. *Francis Xavier*, who is justly stiled the *Apostle of the Indies*, because he preached the gospel, with the spirit and power of an *Apostle*, to the *Indian* nations, among whom he had great success in gaining souls to Christ, *the Lord working withall and confirming the word with signs that followed*, as was attested by credible witnesses, and may be seen in his life set forth by father *Bouhours*.

On the coast of *Fishery*, he raised four dead persons to life. The first was a catechist, called *Antonio Miranda*, who had been stung by one of those venomous serpents of the *Indies*, whose stings are always mortal. The second was a child, who fell into a pit and was drowned. The two others were, a young man and a maid, whom a pestilential fever had carried off, after a short sickness.

In the kingdom of *Travancor*, while he was preaching to some obstinate idolaters, he addressed a most fervent petition to God, begging that he would soft-

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ten their obdurate hearts : then turning himself to his audience, with a strong faith, he said : ‘ Well ; since you will not believe me on my word, behold that which will make me be believed. What testimony do you desire from me, of those truths which I have declared to you ? ’ At the same instant, recalling to his remembrance, that a man had been there buried the day before, he said : ‘ Open the sepulchre which you closed yesterday, and bring out the body : but observe carefully whether he who was buried, be truly dead.’ They did so, and perceived that the corpse began to putrify, with a noisome scent. The Saint fell upon his knees, and after a short prayer, addressing himself to the dead : ‘ I command thee, said he, in the holy name of the living God, to arise, for the confirmation of that religion which I preach.’ At these words the dead arose of himself, and appeared not only living, but vigorous and in perfect health. On the same coast a young man, a Christian, having been dead above four and twenty hours ; the parents, with all their kindred, were carrying the corpse to the grave, when by chance they met the holy father. Upon sight of him, they conceived great hopes ; and embracing his knees, implored him to restore their son to life. Their strong faith was soon rewarded. The blessed man begged the assistance of the most high God, made the sign of the cross, threw holy water on the dead ; after which he took him by the hand, raised him up in the name of the Lord, and restored him living to his father and mother. To preserve the memory of an action so wonderful and so authentick, the parents erected a great cross,

cross, on the place where the miracle was done ; and were accustomed afterwards to go often thither, and pray to God before it.

At *Malacca* he raised to life a dead maid, after she had been three days interred, and a young man, named *Francis Ciavus*, whom they were actually burying when *Xavier* came by chance that way. At *Cangoxima* in *Japan* he raised to life a young maid of quality ; by which means, she and her father were brought over from idolatry to the christian religion.

On some occasions he was favoured with the gift of tongues. On the coast of *Travancor*, he spoke very well the language of those barbarians, without having learned it, as is attested by a *Portuguese* of *Coimbra*, called *Vaz*, who attended him in many of his travels, and, being returned into *Europe*, related those passages of which himself had been an eye-witness. In this country it was, that he reaped such a plentiful harvest of souls, as he writes himself, that in one month he baptized, with his own hand, ten thousand idolaters. So again at *Amanguchi* in *Japan*, where there were great numbers of *Chinese* merchants, he preached to them in their mother tongue, without having ever learned the *Chinese* language. But it is observable that this gift was not granted to him in all countries, neither was it permanent, when it was granted ; but rather adapted to special times and occasions, according to the good pleasure of God, who giveth to every one as he will.

Reducible to this gift of tongues, is that other extraordinary grace which was granted to the holy father, in his conferences with the *Bonzas* of *Japan*, whereby

whereby he satisfied, with one only answer, the questions of many persons, on very different subjects, so as to give them to understand what they desired to know, in the same manner as if he had answered each of their several demands in particular. This miraculous effect the obstinate idolaters ascribed to I know not what secret kind of science, which they imagined he only possessed. For which reason father *Cosmo de Torrez* being returned from *Firando* to *Amanguchi*, the *Bonzas* said: This man is not endued with the great knowledge of father *Francis*, nor has the art of resolving many doubts with one only answer. And father *Antonio Quadros*, who travelled to *Japan* four years after father *Xavier*, writing to father *Diego Moron*, Provincial of *Portugal*, attests the same in these words: 'A *Japonese* informed me, that he had seen three miracles wrought by father *Xavier*, in his country. He made a person walk and speak who was dumb and taken with the palsy. He gave voice to another mute: and hearing to one that was deaf. This *Japonian* also told me, that father *Xavier* was esteemed, in *Japan*, for the most knowing man of *Europe*, and that the other fathers of the society were nothing to him, because they could answer but one idolater at a time; but that father *Xavier*, by one only word, decided ten or twelve questions. When I told him, that this might probably happen, because those questions were alike; he assured me it was not so; but that, on the contrary, they were very different. He added lastly, that this was no extraordinary thing with him, but a common practice.'

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As to the gift of healing diseases, it were endless to recount the many wonderful cures, which were performed by his ministry. He sometimes sent even the children, whom he had baptized, to touch the sick with his beads, or his crucifix, or his reliquary, and to repeat over them the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the commandments, by which means many miraculous cures were wrought. At *Malacca*, he converted many idolators, Mahometans and Jews, who were convinced, by the evidence of their own eyes, that the hand of God was with him, in curing the sick with his touch; of which numberless instances were juridically attested, by eye-witnesses, when informations were taken in order for his canonization.

The gift of prophecy he possessed in an eminent degree, and foretold to several persons divers accidents, which should befall them in life, and many events which, to all human appearance, were very unlikely to happen. By divine revelation he knew what was transacted at a great distance from him. At *Ternate*, one of the *Mo-
lucca* islands, while he was preaching to the *Por-
tuguese*, he stopped short in the middle of his dis-
course, and said after a little pause. *Pray to God
for the soul of John Galvan, who is drowned in the
Gulph.* Three days after, the truth of the father's
words was made known, when the body of *John
Galvan*, and the wreck of a vessel were thrown up
by the sea. Another time, saying mass, when
he turned to the people to say *Orate Fratres*, he
added. *Pray also for John Araus, who is just now
dead at Amboyna.* Ten or twelve days after, there
arrived a ship from *Amboyna*, and the truth was
known.

known not only by divers letters, but confirmed also by a *Portuguese*, who had seen Araus die, at the same moment when Xavier exhorted the people, to pray to God to rest his soul.

These and many other wonderful works, which I here omit, are not idle reports, without any certain grounds, or authority, but real facts, the truth of which was maturely examined and ascertained, in a legal manner. For, as soon as it was known in *Europe*, that the man of God was dead, *Don John III*, king of *Portugal*, gave orders to the viceroy of the *Indies*, *Don Francis Barreto*, to make a verbal process of his life and miracles. This was executed at *Goa*, at *Cochin*, at the coast of *Fishery*, at *Malacca*, at the *Moluccas* and other parts. And men of probity, who were also discerning and able persons, were sent upon the places, heard the witnesses, and examined the matters of fact, with all possible exactness. To this we may add the testimony of adversaries. The *Japonian Bonzas*, to elude the influence of his miracles, pretended they had seen him entertain a familiar spirit, who taught him to cast lots, and perform certain magical operations, to delude the ignorant. Among the *Indian idolaters*, and *Mahometans*, he was called *the man of prodigies, the friend of heaven, the master of nature, and the God of the world*; because they saw him do works which far surpassed the powers of nature.

The blessed man ended his labours and his life, in the island of *Sancian*, where he was seeking how he might introduce the gospel into the great empire of *China*. His body was first interred there, in a great chest, which was filled up with unslaked lime; to the end that, the flesh being soon

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consumed, his bones might be carried back into India. After he had been ten weeks in the ground, they opened the coffin, to see whether the flesh were entirely wasted: but, having taken the lime from off the face; they found it ruddy and fresh coloured, like that of a man who is in a sweet repose. Looking farther, they saw that the whole body was sound and uncorrupted: but, to satisfy all doubts and scruples, they cut a little of the flesh on the right thigh, near the knee, and beheld the blood running from it. The sacerdotal habits, with which he had been vested after his decease, were no ways endamaged by the lime. And what was most amazing to them all; was, that the holy corpse exhaled an odour so delightful and so fragrant, that, by the relation of many there present, the most exquisite perfumes came nothing near it.

I omit sundry miracles, which were wrought in divers places, by this holy father's intercession, while they were conveying the corpse from *San-cian* to *Goa*; and many others which, since that time, have been done at his venerable reliques, as is attested by eye-witnesses, who were juridically interrogated and examined concerning these matters.

St. *Teresa*. § 7. The same century was witness to the wonderful life of St. *Teresa*, foundress of the reformation of the *discalced Carmelites*, who was conducted, by the spirit of God, in a most extraordinary manner, to an eminent degree of perfection; not only for the benefit of her own soul, but also for that of many others, who put themselves under her direction, and indeed for the general advantage of the whole Church, in which

which a multitude of pretended reformers were then actually working incredible mischief. The Saint herself speaks thus of it, in one of her works, called *the way of perfection*, chap. 1.

‘ About this time came to my knowledge the miseries of France, and the havock the hereticks made there, and how much this unhappy sect went on increasing. It troubled me exceedingly, and as though I could have done, or had been something, I cried to our Lord, and besought him to remedy so great an evil. Methought I could have laid down a thousand lives, to recover but one soul of the many there lost. But seeing myself a woman, and wicked, disabled for promoting the service of our Lord. I resolved to do that little that in me lay, to wit, follow the evangelical counsels with all the perfection I could, and to procure that those few nuns that are here might do the same’.

The many visions and divine revelations with which she was favoured, are recorded by herself, in the account which she wrote of her own life, by order of her spiritual director. At the end of chap. 27, of her life, speaking of St. Peter of Alcantara, whom she had often consulted in her doubts, she says: ‘ Since his death, our Lord, hath been pleased to let me enjoy more of him now, than I did when he was alive, giving me counsel in divers occasions; and I have seen him, many times, in exceeding great glory. The first time that he appeared to me, he said: O happy penance which hath obtained so great a reward! with many other things. A year before he died, he appeared to me, when we were absent from one another; and I knew that he should

• should die, and advertised him thereof, whilst
• he was some leagues from me. When he gave
• up the ghost, he appeared to me and told me,
• that he was going to rest. I did not then be-
• lieve it ; but yet I related it to some, and with-
• in eight days after, the news came to us, that
• he was dead ; or rather, to speak more properly,
• that he had then begun to live for ever'.

Chap. 34. ' They told me once, says she, that
a certain man was dead, who had been *Provincial*
here. . . . When I knew that he was dead, I
was much troubled at it, because I was in fear
of his salvation, in regard that he had been a
superior twenty years, which is a thing I much
fear, as holding it to be a matter of much dan-
ger, to have charge of souls. And so, in great
trouble, I went to an oratory, and gave him all
the good which I had ever done in my whole
life, which was little enough : and so I humbly
besought our Lord, that his merits might sup-
ply what that soul needed, towards the freeing
it out of purgatory. And whilst I was begging
this of our Lord, in the best manner I could,
methought he rose up from some deep part of
the earth, on my right side ; and so I saw him
ascend to heaven with very great joy . . . And
I could not possibly doubt but that the vision
was true, I mean, no illusion'. After this she
relates the particulars of three other visions, where-
by she was assured, that the persons, for whose
souls she was praying, were delivered out of pur-
gatory.

In the same chapter she declares, that our Lord
was, many times, pleased to let her see him in the
sacred host. In particular, going one day to re-
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ceive the blessed sacrament, she saw him in great majesty, in the hands of the priest, in the host which he was going to administer to her. At the same time, she understood, by a vision, that this same priest was in the state of sin, which troubled her exceedingly. But, says she, 'our Lord himself
• said vnto me, that I should pray for him ; and
• told me, that he had suffered what I had seen,
• that I might understand what power and force
• *the words of consecration* have ; and that God
• would not be kept from thence, how wicked
• foever that priest were, who pronounced them'.

The 35th and 36th chapters are full of the heavenly visions and miraculous favours, which it pleased God to bestow upon her ; all which she committed to writing, by the command of her ghostly father, to the end that they might be examined by persons of the greatest virtue and capacity. The particulars being too long, to be inserted into this treatise, I must refer the reader to that excellent book of her life and the foundation of her monasteries, in which, the simplicity, candour and sincerity that shine through every page, are of themselves sufficient to exclude all suspicion of imposture.

Add to this, that no one could possibly be more cautious and careful than she was, to avoid the illusions and deceits of the devil. For this end, she disclosed the secrets of her conscience, to all the persons she could meet with, who were eminent for piety and learning. In her fourth relation, she makes mention of near thirty religious men, with whom she had conferred on these subjects, some of whom are now revered as Saints by the whole Church of God. These enlightened persons

made frequent and long trials of her; and were all satisfied, that she was not deceived. Whenever she heard of any eminent person, who spoke against her, as several there were, who, having been misinformed, disapproved of her spirit, she chose to confess herself to them, hoping, through their impartiality, to come to a better knowledge of her own faults. But the issue was, that all turned to a general approbation. And those who formerly had most suspected and questioned her spirit, became her greatest patrons and admirers; and several of them, seeing evidently, in her, the wonderful effects of prayer, betook themselves, from that time, to a more assiduous practice of that great duty. All which considered, we must conclude, that it is as certain, as such a thing can be, that the supernatural visions and revelations, which were granted to this Saint, were real facts.

She died in the year 1582: her body was preserved free from corruption, and emitted a most odiferous smell, as is attested by father *Ribera* l. 5. c. 3. who viewed it at leisure in the year 1588. After which, he relates many miracles done at her sacred reliques.

St. Charles Borromeo. In the same age, lived that incomparable prelate, St. *Charles Borromeo*, Cardinal and Archbishop of *Milan*, whose pastoral zeal contributed very much towards the happy conclusion of the council of *Trent*, in which, by a definitive sentence of the Church, the erroneous doctrines of the reformers were condemned. This great Saint exposed himself to many dangers, in the execution of his charge; but the hand of God visibly protected him, of which I shall mention one signal instance. Several abuses having crept

crept into a certain religious order of men, called *Humiliats*, the holy Cardinal thought it necessary to establish a reformation among them. But these obstinate spirits, rather than submit to his regulations, resolved to have him assassinated, and accordingly procured a wicked instrument, *Jerome Donatus Farina*, one of that order, to undertake the execution of it, for forty crowns of gold. The Cardinal had evening prayers in a hall of his palace, to which his family and several other devout persons usually resorted. The wretch judging that this was a proper time and place for perpetrating the horrid crime, got admittance into the hall, and while the Saint was on his knees before the altar, fired a musket at him loaded with a large ball and other shot. Every one started up in surprize, and the whole company was in the utmost confusion; but the Saint, having quieted them, caused them all to return to their places, and continued himself, without stirring, till the end of prayers, with as much tranquillity of mind, and serenity of countenance, as if nothing had happened. By this delay, the assassin made his escape, without being pursued. The prelate, when he first received the shot, thought, by the pain it gave him, that he was mortally wounded: but the providence of God miraculously interposed in his favour. The ball, which, according to the course of nature, should have passed through his body, only pierced his rochet and cassock and some other cloaths, and fell at his feet: one of the shot had reached to the flesh; but when he was undressed, they found only a black mark, with a small swelling, more like a token of the danger he had been in, than a wound. After a

long search, the assassin, with his accomplices, were discovered and taken ; and, notwithstanding the holy Cardinal's most earnest sollicitations to the contrary, three of those unworthy monks were put to death by publick justice, and the order was entirely abolished by the Pope.

St. Philip Neri. Another eminent Saint of the sixteenth century, is *Philip Neri*, whose

life, in which are related many miraculous works performed by him, was published, five years after his death, by *Antony Gallonius* a priest who had been intimately acquainted with him. ‘ I write, says he, things many of which I have seen with my own eyes. . . . This which I have written, (that the reader may not doubt the truth of it,) is received from near three hundred witnesses, all persons of integrity, examined solemnly and upon oath by *Jacobus Buitiusda Gallese*, Secretary of the Congregation &c. Among these witnesses are six illustrious Cardinals, who had much conversation and great intimacy with *Philip*. Namely, *Alexander de Medicis*, afterwards Pope *Leo XI.* *Ottavius Paravicinus*, *Augustinus Cusanus*, *Frederick Borromeo*, afterwards Archbishop of *Milan*, *Francis Maria Taurugi* and *Cæsar Baronius*’.

Moreover, it is worth while to observe, that this life was published at *Rome*, the very place where *Philip Neri* had lived. The particular circumstances, of time, place and persons concerned, are mentioned, together with the names of the witnesses, who publickly, upon oath, attested the facts, many of whom were then actually living in the same place. Now, it were madness to think, that a grave and good man, as *Gallonius* was,

was, could have been so impudent, to publish such attestations, in such circumstances, if they had not been true. As to the witnesses themselves, many of them were persons of high quality, and some of eminent holiness of life; of whom it were a shame to suspect, that they would conspire to swear to an untruth, and lose their own souls, for the sake of acquiring to another man the reputation of a Saint.

That this blessed man had the gift of prophecy, and exactly foretold to many persons their deaths, or their recovery from sickness, and other future events, is severally attested by a number of sworn witnesses of great credit. He knew also the most secret thoughts of men, as is attested, upon oath, by several persons. Cardinal *Taurusius* says: 'Divers times, *Philip* seeing me would name to me the sins that lay hid in my heart, before ever I disclosed them to him. Cardinal *Octavius Paravicinus* affirms: I can witness, upon my own frequent experience, how miraculously *Philip* would enter into the thoughts of standers by, having admired with myself which way he should come to know the inward conceptions of my mind'. And Cardinal *Paul Crescentius* says: 'That *Philip* could penetrate into the very thoughts of the heart, my own experience confirms to me; since he hath manifested things to me, which no man could possibly know besides myself'. The same is positively attested by many other unexceptionable witnesses, of their own knowledge and experience. By this supernatural gift, he induced several persons to make sincere confessions of their sins, relating to them, distinctly and in order, the several crimes and bad

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thoughts, which they had concealed in former confessions, as is attested by the persons concerned.

Of his power over unclean spirits we have an instance, in the person of a maid named *Catharine*, who was brought from *Campania* to *Rome*, to be exorcized by him. Of herself, she was wholly illiterate, without the least smattering of learning, yet she spoke *greek* and *latin* perfectly well; and, by the help of the devil, foresaw at what hour *Philip* would send to adjure her, saying. *That priest bath now sent one to bring me to him by force*, and presently ran away and sought to hide herself. He cast the devil out by praying to God for her, as is attested, upon oath, by Cardinal *Taurugi*, and divers others.

Paul, a youth of fourteen years old, son of *Fabri-
cius Maximus*, a noble *Roman*, being dead of a malignant fever, was raised to life by this servant of God; which fact the father of the youth and others who were present attested upon oath. There are, likewise, many attestations of miraculous cures wrought by him, on sick persons; sometimes, by the sign of the cross; at other times, by the touch of his hand, or by prayer alone: which attestations are delivered upon oath, by the persons so cured, and by other eye witnesses.

He foretold the day and hour and manner of his own death, which happened on the 26 of May an. 1595. And it pleased God, to honour his reliques with evident miracles, while the corpse was yet unburied. I shall insert here but one fact, which was attested by six sworn eye-witnesses. *Austin de Magistris*, a youth about twelve years of age, who, for seven years together, had been troubled

troubled with the evil, and a dangerous ulcer in his mouth, being informed by his schoolfellows, that a holy priest at *Valicella* was dead, who had done many miracles, presently repaired to the sacred corpse, and praying a while before it, put the blessed man's hand to his throat, and was instantly healed. More instances of the same nature, supported by proper testimonies, are mentioned in his life, to which I refer the reader.

I say nothing of the wonderful works of St. Francis of *Paula*, St. *Cajetan*, St. *John de Deo*, St. *Ignatius*, St. *Thomas of Villa Nova*, St. *Peter of Alcantara*, St. *Francis Borgia*, St. *John a Cruce* and many other illustrious Saints, who flourished in the sixteenth century. The few instances which I have already alledged are sufficient for the purpose of this treatise, without entering into a long detail of more particulars. But I cannot forbear observing, first, that scarce any past age hath been blessed with more shining examples of solid virtue, or more evident proofs of extraordinary graces, than this of which we are now speaking: and, secondly, that all the persons, so conspicuous for these supernatural gifts, were zealous members of the catholick Church.

§ 8. In the seventeenth century flourished St. Francis of Sales, bishop and prince of Geneva. This holy prelate having ordered a certain priest of his diocese to be confined, on account of a violent madness into which he was fallen, went to see him, attended by his domesticks. The place he was in was shut up with strong bars, through which the bishop observing the fury that appeared in his looks, and other symptons of his deplorable con-

St. Francis
of Sales.

dition, burst into tears, and turning to those that were with him: ‘Behold, said he, what man is, when destitute of reason. But God, to whom this man belongs by so many titles, will leave him no longer in this lamentable state; let us all pray him to take pity on him’. This said, he stood silent, for a time, in the deepest recollection, and then commanded the place to be opened. The whole company was frightened at his orders; and every man, doubly concerned, for his bishop, and for himself, opposed his design. But the holy prelate, as he was full of faith and confidence in God, to whom nothing is impossible, assured them that there was no manner of danger, and that the time of God’s mercy upon this poor man was now come. The door being opened, he went in alone; and taking the madman by his hand: *Brother*, said he, *put your trust in God*. Then he put his hand on his head, and disentangled his hair, which was all in disorder. That same moment, his fury was calmed, the agitation of his body ceased, tranquillity settled in his eyes and countenance. The cure was as perfect as it was sudden. Nor could any doubt it, when they saw the bishop lead him from the prison, to his episcopal palace, where he had him new cloathed, and made him sit at his own table: and then sent him back to his former abode, so perfectly reestablished, that he had never after the least symptom of that evil. To this might be added many other miraculous cures, which he effected by prayer, by the sign of the cross &c. as may be seen in the writers of his life.

He changed this mortal life for immortality, in the year 1622. In the year 1661 he was beatified.

tified, after a most exact and mature examination made of his heroick virtues, and the miracles wrought by his intercession. The following facts are part of what was proved to be incontestably true, in that examination.

Jerome Gemin was drowned, and the smell of the corpse was already very offensive, when, on a sudden, while they were carrying it to the grave, he came to life, and immediately declared the praises of St. *Francis of Sales*, saying, that the blessed bishop had appeared that very moment to him, vested in his pontifical dress, with a sweet and shining countenance.

Claudius Marmon, who had been entirely blind from his birth, received his eye-sight, by performing a devotion of nine days at the tomb of this Saint.

Jane Petronilla Evrax: five years old, being paralytick, and her legs and thighs so dried up, that there was no appearance of her being ever able to walk; was suddenly and perfely cured, while her father was praying for her at St. *Francis's* tomb.

Frances de la Pesse, who was drowned in a river, was restored to life by his intercession. Her resurrection was so perfect, that there did not remain in her body the least swelling, or change of colour, or any other mark of that fatal accident.

Charles Moteron had no use of his limbs from his birth, and was besides so deformed that he appeared more like a monster than a human creature. By the intercession of the same holy bishop he was perfectly cured, and his limbs were redressed and strengthened.

In

St. Francis
Regis.

In the same century, the Society of Jesus produced to the world a shining pattern of christian virtues in the person of St. John Francis Regis, by whom many incontestable miracles were wrought, during the course of his apostolical labours here on earth. Several of them are inserted into his life written by Father Dawbenton, supported by most convincing testimonies. In the third book it is related that, by his prayers, he cured several persons on a sudden, who were at the point of death by sickness. He was favoured with the gift of prophecy, and of knowing others most secret thoughts. James Jacmon, a noted physician at Puy, deposed upon oath, that the Saint had, by a divine light, penetrated into the most secret recesses of his heart, and foretold several particulars of his life, which were all exactly verified. Many other remarkable instances of the same prophetick spirit are recorded in that book.

Claudius, son of Hugh Sourdon Doctor of laws, and one of the principal inhabitants of Fay, having been afflicted six years with a grievous fluxion on his eyes, at last became totally blind; under which misfortune he had laboured six months, when he was presented to the Saint, who was come to that place to preach. The holy man bid him put his whole confidence in God, and betook himself to prayer, with some of the family. He had not ended his prayer, when the youth recovered his sight; from which time, he neither felt any pain nor fluxion. This he attested himself before the bishops of Puy and Valence, many years after: and added to his deposition, that the fame of this miracle gave another

other blind man hopes of recovering his sight. He was forty years of age and had been blind eight. The man of God made the sign of the cross over him, and immediately his sight was restored.

James Andre, curate of *Marlhes*, gives the following account from his own knowledge. ‘ Another day, says he, as I brought the holy man from the Church to my house, a numberless crowd followed us. A country-man, come from a great distance, had not time to make his confession; because, as it was very late, I had obliged *Regis* to leave the confession-seat. This good man, longing to speak to him, strove to break through the crowd, and made great haste to overtake us. Near my house is a very steep descent, the country-man, pushed on by persons in like haste, fell, and violently hitting his arm against a stone, slipt his shoulder. The holy man was presently acquainted with the accident. He turned back, in great concern, to find the poor man, touched his shoulder, and having blessed it, set it again into joint. Then hearing his confession he dismissed him full of comfort and well recovered. In the course of the same mission he discovered to some their most secret thoughts, and foretold to others several events, which, in process of time, verified his predictions.’

This blessed man was called to receive the crown of life, on the last day of the year 1640. Since which time, numberless miracles have been wrought at his reliques, even by the very dust of his tomb. The archbishop of *Vienne*, in a letter written

written to his holiness the Pope October 11. 1710.
‘ speaks thus: During the life of F. *John Francis Regis*, all esteemed and revered him as a Saint: but the opinion they had conceived of his sanctity is greatly increased, since his death, by the great numbers of miracles which God daily works at his tomb, to make him more illustrious. The dust of his tomb is carried into all the provinces of the kingdom, and is carefully preserved as an universal remedy against all diseases.’ And twenty two archbishops and bishops, in their letter to Pope *Clement XI*, attest the same. ‘ We congratulate ourselves, say they, that it hath pleased God to raise, in our days, an apostolical man among us, endued with the grace of miracles . . . We are witnesses, that before the tomb of F. *John Francis Regis*, the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak &c.’

For the satisfaction of the reader I shall transcribe, from the Saint’s life, some more circumstantial accounts of the wonders done by his intercession.

Magdalene Arnauld, a religious woman of St. *Mary’s* at *Puy*, aged fifty years, was reduced to the last extremity by a formed dropsy, joined with a palsy. When the physicians were of opinion that she could not survive half an hour, a relique of the Saint was put into her hands. After she had kissed it with devotion, she said: ‘ Great servant of God, my only desire in this world is, to accomplish the adorable will of God. If I wish my health restored, ’tis only to repair, by a fervent life, the tepidity of my former conduct. Obtain for me, from God, one

one year more to make a holy preparation for death, and to satisfy the divine justice by penance.' Having said this; she applied the relique to her stomach. That moment she found herself cured, the monstrous swelling was absolutely dispersed. The day following, she rose at four of the clock with the community, and assisted at divine office in perfect health. At the year's end she departed this life. Fourteen eye-witnesses of the disease and recovery of this religious woman, and of her prayer to St. *Regis*, attested upon oath the truth of this miracle.

John Gaspar Montereymar, of *Puy*, having laboured for several years under a rupture; the surgeons, at last, declared his recovery impossible. On the 29th of *January* anno 1674, his pains were so violent, that it was thought death would soon be the consequence. In this distress, he made a vow, that, if it should please God to grant his recovery, he would go on a pilgrimage to St. *Regis*'s tomb. He had scarce made an end, when he found himself absolutely cured. He sent, that instant, for his surgeon, who upon examining, could not find any tumour or hardness, though there had been, before, a hard swelling as big as a man's head. This miracle is attested by the Vicar General of *Puy*, two physicians, two surgeons, several members of the presidial court and chapter.

A religious woman of the *visitation* at *Moulin's*, by name *Jane Mary Peret*, was suddenly cured of a dropsy and palsy by performing a *Novena*, or nine days devotion, to beg the intercession of St. *Francis Regis*. This happened on the 22 of Nov. 1701. The year following, the bishop of *Clermont*

mont went to that place, by his Holiness's orders, with two dignitaries of the Church, to draw up a verbal process of the miracle. He examined sister *Peret*, her superior, the infirmarians, and other sisters of the monastery, the curate of St. Peter's their superior, the confessarius and chaplain of the house, the persons of greatest distinction in that town. He singled out twelve eye-witnesses of the disease and the cure, and swearing them on the holy gospels, received their depositions. In his letter to the Pope, he assures him, that the whole town acknowledged this miracle, without contradiction from any person.

I omit numberless other miraculous cures, no less remarkable than these already mentioned, which are attested by the persons so cured, and by other eye-witnesses, of known probity and veracity; noblemen, members of the parliament of *Toulouse*, lawyers, physicians, surgeons, &c. An account of which may be seen more at large, in the sixth book of the Saint's life. These miracles being examined with all imaginable precaution, Pope *Clement XI.* proceeded to the beatification of this servant of God on the 24th of *May 1716*. And he was afterwards canonized by *Clement XII.* on the 24th of *June 1737*.

Another eminent Saint, who adorned the Church of God, in this century, is St. *Vincent of Paul*, founder of the congregation of missionary priests, for the instruction of the poor. He was called to eternal rest in the year 1660, and was canonized by Pope *Clement XII.* an. 1737. He was endued with the gift of prophecy, as appears from the testimony of an unexceptionable witness, *Martin Hufson*, one of the ablest lawyers of the parliament

parliament of *Paris*, in a letter written by him an. 1661. ‘ I had forgot, says he, to tell you, that the deceased servant of God foretold me secret and hidden things, which did not come to pass till two years after, and which he could not then foresee, but by an illumination, or to speak more properly, by a prophetick spirit ’.

A Nun, who was disordered in her senses, through the violence of her suspicions and jealousy about others being preferred before her, having made her complaint, at the grate, to the man of God ; he said to her : *Go my child, you shall never more be troubled.* From that time, her uneasiness and temptations returned no more. This is attested in an authentick act, signed by the superiours of the *Visitation* at *Troies*, and legalized by the bishop of the place.

A young man of the Saint’s congregation was cured of a settled head-ach, by touching his cloaths, as he passed by.

John des Croisilles, one of his missionary priests, whom he sent, a little time before his death, to *Toul* in *Lorraine*, being seized with such violent pains, that he was rendered incapable of performing his duty, recommended himself, in that condition, to the intercession of the blessed man, who was then lately dead. His prayer was no sooner ended, but he was perfectly restored. This was attested by the priest himself, and the attestation legalized by the bishop of *Toul*.

This Saint’s reliques, which are justly valued above gold or precious stones, have been the instruments of many miraculous cures, as was proved, after a severe and strict scrutiny, in the pro-
cess

cess for his beatification. I shall mention but two instances.

Claudius Joseph Compoin, who had intirely lost his eye sight for eighteen months, recovered it again on a sudden, while he was praying at the Saint's tomb.

Alexander Philip le Grand, a youth brought up in the foundling hospital at *Paris*, having entirely lost the use of his arms and legs, had been four years under the care of surgeons without any benefit, and was therefore ordered to be sent to the *Incurables*. But, putting his trust in God, and recommending himself to the intercession of St. *Vincent*, he recovered the perfect use of his limbs, by performing a *Novena*, or nine days devotion, at his tomb.

Miracle
done at
Paris.

I shall now close this deduction of facts, with a brief account of a celebrated miracle wrought at *Paris*, in the

parish of St. *Margaret*, on the feast of the blessed Sacrament the 31st of *May* an. 1725. *Anne Charlier*, the person on whom the miracle was wrought, had been afflicted twenty years, before this event, with a loss of blood, which, for the last seven years, was become so constant, so violent, and so obstinate, that all experiments and attempts to cure her proved equally dangerous and ineffectual. The last year and a half, she was so far spent and exhausted, that she was not able to walk, even with crutches, and the least motion was enough to make her faint away. On the feast of the blessed Sacrament, she got herself carried down to the street, to the end that she might be ready, when the procession should pass by,

by, to address her adoration and prayers to the world's Redeemer, whom she stedfastly believed to be really present in the Sacrament. Being at the door, she found herself extremely ill, neither well able to bear the air, nor the light. But, as soon as they told her that the blessed Sacrament was near, she strove, with all her force, to throw herself on her knees, and fell on her hands, crying out at the same time : *O Lord, if you will, you can cure me. I believe you are the very same who entered into Jerusalem. Forgive me my sins, and I shall be healed.* She had crawled along a little way, upon her hands and knees, still crying out, *Jesus Christ, you can cure me;* when she felt, on a sudden, that she gathered strength. Then she cried out louder, *O Lord suffer me to enter into your temple, and I shall be cured.* After this she found herself able to stand and walk, and followed after the blessed Sacrament, in the midst of the crowd, losing nevertheless, all the way, a vast quantity of blood. Being come to St. Margaret's Church door, she redoubled her prayers, that she might not enter into the Church, without being entirely cured; and the very moment that she set her foot within the temple of the Lord, she perceived that the flowing of her blood was wholly stayed. She remained in the Church during the divine office, and returned home, on foot, perfectly recovered, attended by a great multitude of people praising and giving thanks to God.

This miracle, of itself publick and notorious, was so carefully examined, and so well attested by many persons of unquestionable sense and probity, who were witnesses both of the sickness and cure of the party, that the author of the *Cri-*

teriorion confesses, he cannot see the least room for doubting that the cure was really effected. Nevertheless, he will not call it a *miracle*, but thinks it may be deemed a natural effect of the transports of her devotion.

But, I believe he will find it very hard, to persuade the world, that the sole fervour of devotion, without any miraculous interposition, is capable of giving strength and vigour and good health, on a sudden, to a body already spent and exhausted by a disease of twenty years continuance. The instances, which he alledges, of persons having recovered out of paralytick disorders, by some unexpected and sudden emotion of joy, do not serve to prove his assertion; because, though we suppose the facts to be as he relates them, yet they do not come up to the point in question. One may conceive how a sudden transport of gladness may give, as it were, new life and vigour to the blood and fluids, and promote so brisk and cheerful a circulation, as to remove those obstructions which are the cause of paralytick disorders, which being once removed, the parts, which before were impeded or stopt, will return mechanically to their proper functions. But the case is widely different, when a body has been emaciated and worn out by violent and extraordinary evacuations, for many years together, which have reduced it to the utmost degree of weakness. That a woman, in this condition, should recover her strength at once, by a fervent devotion, without a miracle, is utterly inconceivable. Nothing less than the hand of God can repair the injuries done to the body by so long sickness, and restore it, on a sudden, to perfect sanity.

If

If our author can prove, that such is the efficacy of *transports of devotion*, I think he will justly merit the thanks of the faculty ; no less than Dr. Middleton does, for his discovery of the extensive power of oil : for, by these two simple remedies, greater feats may be done, than were ever thought possible by all the disciples of *Hippocrates*. But it is well if the freethinkers do not assume to themselves a liberty of administering the same remedies, and, by the help of them, resolve most of the gospel miracles into natural events, with as much ease and freedom, as this Gentleman has done the cure of *Anne Charlier*.

I need not say any thing of the miracles ascribed to the *Abbé de Paris*, which Middleton, with great confidence and no less falsehood, tells us, are believed by a great part of *France*, or by all, perhaps who believe any other miracles of the catholick Church. He could not, possibly, be so ignorant as not to know, that those pretended miracles are rejected by the whole body of the *French* bishops, by the inferiour clergy, and all the rest of the kingdom, except a few who find their account in keeping up the credit of a party, which, being destitute of truth, cannot be otherwise supported than by fiction and imposture of one kind or other. Therefore when he says, that we ought either to admit all, or reject all : that we ought to assign a reason, why we give credit to some miracles, and not to those of the *Abbé de Paris*, the answer is very plain and obvious : That these prodigies, ascribed to the *Abbé*, have been rejected, after a mature exami-

Pretend
miracles
of Abbé
de Paris.

nation, by the pastors of the Church, whose duty it is to examine such facts, and to reject or admit them, according to the merits of the cause. Now, if the Doctor can bring any authority of the like weight, against the miracles which we have alledged, we will readily allow them to be of no force in the present question.

From hence also will appear the disingenuity of another writer, who, in his answer to *Middleton's Inquiry*, says: The adversaries of the *Abbé de Paris* dared not bring the miracles, ascribed to him, to a publick examination; lest that method should be carried too far, and affect other miracles, in a country where superstition is established, and implicit faith required. For, certain it is, that never were facts discussed with greater liberty, or more amply, than these have been. The pretended miracles were published with their vouchers, affidavits, certificates &c. They have been severally examined by learned authors, who have published their remarks to the world, and have shewn them to be the result of art and contrivance. This every one knows, who knows any thing of the disputes which, of late years, have made so much noise in *France*. So that I cannot forbear observing, that even those, who are seemingly the most candid and sincere, regard not whether what they say be true, or not, provided it doth but serve to asperse the catholick Church. Besides, every one, who knows but the first principles of our religion, must know, that, neither in *France* nor any other christian country in the world, is an implicit faith in miracles required. Miracles are not revealed truths,

but

but only historical facts, to which we give more or less credit, in proportion to the evidence by which they are supported.

§ 9. From all that hath been said on this subject, it is evident that Dr. *Middleton* did not mistake, when he affirmed, that the continuance of miracles, down to the present times, is proved by as credible and convincing testimonies, as in any age since the Apostles: and therefore that no other part is left, but either, to reject the miracles of every age, except those of the scriptures, agreeably to the genuine interests and principles of *Protestants*; or else to admit all which are supported by incontestible evidence, whatever age it be in which they are said to have been done, agreeably to the practice of *Catholicks*. For, surely it is inconsistent with reason, to admit the miracles of one century, because they are attested by credible witnesses; and to reject those of the next, or any succeeding one, which are attested by witnesses no ways inferior to the former, either in point of learning, or discernment, or veracity. If the reasons for admitting the miracles of a later age, be as powerful and convincing as any that can be assigned for those of primitive times, it is evident that they are equally credible, and claim an equal degree of assent. Therefore we affirm, that the miracles of the seventeenth century must necessarily obtain belief, no less than those of the second, with all men who square their sentiments according to the dictates of reason. For if, when two facts are ascertained by *equal evidence*, one of them is rejected, and the other admitted, it is plain that so partial a determination cannot flow

Conclu-
tion.

from reason, but must be the offspring of caprice, or party-prejudice.

What though such facts are not agreeable to the *genuine interests and principles* of some particular sect? Is that alone sufficient to justify a rejection of them? Surely not. The miracles of Christ were as opposite to the interests and principles of paganism, as light is to darkness: but no one, I hope, will presume to say, that they ought, therefore, to have been rejected by the pagans. In every concern, but above all in matters of religion, *truth* should be the standard of our decisions. Whoever discovers that the interests of his own party clash with the truth, cannot help seeing that he is deluded by a *spurious* interest, which he ought to forsake, from that moment, in order to join himself to the party on whose side truth appears. If then, on one hand, the genuine interests and principles of Protestants require, that all miracles be rejected, except those of the scriptures, as Dr. Middleton confesses; and if, on the other hand, such miracles be so well ascertained that no reasonable man can deny their reality; what will the consequence be? I shall leave the reader to deduce it; and for my own part, shall only observe, at present, that the miracles must be credited, if there is faith in man: yet they are irreconcileable with *protestantism*, as the Doctor affirms, and every one will see, who doth but attentively consider the whole matter. This at least, I believe, every person of candour will allow, that a serious inquiry into the merits of the evidence, brought in support of these miracles, is a work of importance, and worthy of every lover of truth.

To

To bring the cause to a short issue, let me observe that the existence of miracles is a matter of fact; and that, to ascertain a matter of fact, it is sufficient that it be attested by eye witnesses, men of probity and of good sense. Numberless vouchers, thus qualified, have been, and many more might be produced, in the present controversy, to whose testimonies I do not see what reasonable, objection can possibly be made. Therefore these matters of fact are raised to as high a degree of certainty as the nature of the subject requires.

If it be objected, that such facts are not examined and discussed with sufficient care: We answer, that it is absolutely improbable, that men of sense and virtue would solemnly aver and attest a fact, which they had not sufficiently examined. But, that no scruple may remain on this head, I shall briefly relate what is done, previous to the canonization of holy men. With regard to miracles; such cures, for instance, as seem to be above the reach of nature, are inquired into at the place where they were done, by persons in authority, deputed for that purpose. The parties concerned, and witnesses of good character, are severally examined, and their juridical depositions received upon oath. These inquiries are, for the most part, made more than once, being repeated at different times, and by different deputies, for the greater security against mistakes and oversights. These depositions are duly legalized, and then sent to *Rome*, where the farther examination of them is committed to a congregation of able men. Here the matter is discussed with the utmost scrupulosity. The nature of the disease which is said to have been cured,

the progress or instantaneousness of the cure, the quality, the number, and the agreement of the witnesses are all severally and maturely considered. To render this scrutiny more severe, a person of distinguished learning and abilities is appointed, to draw up, and to set in the strongest light, all the objections which physick, history or observation may furnish him with against the miraculousness of the work. After this a physician of consummate knowledge and experience is consulted. If he doubt whether the work be supernatural or not, his doubt puts an end to the inquiry, and no more is said of that miracle. If he be of opinion, that it is supernatural; his opinion does not put a stop to the liberty, which is allowed, of arguing against it. A second physician is appointed, to examine the fact, in the same manner as the former. And both of them deliver their opinion before an assembly of able and learned men, who are all bound by oath to make truth and justice the rule of their decision. To all these precautions are added publick prayers, and the tremendous sacrifice of the altar is offered up, to implore the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

The consequence of this severe scrutiny is, that of forty miracles brought to examination at *Rome*, perhaps not a single one is admitted. Not that we are to think, that all, which are rejected there, are cheats or forgeries. Whoever should attempt to impose a known forgery upon them, would meet with the punishment due to his crime and insolence. But, the reason why they are not admitted, is because they are not *sufficiently proved*; which may easily happen, though the fact in question

question be as truly miraculous, as any ever was ; especially, seeing that they admit no proofs as sufficient, but such as raise the matter to a degree of certainty superiour to all scruple or suspicion. And yet, one of *Middleton's* adversaries, speaking of miracles wrought in the catholick Church, says very positively : ‘ Their pretended miracles are only wrought among themselves, when they are not needed, and where a free inquiry into them is not allowed.’ This Gentleman, I presume was utterly unacquainted with the precautions taken at *Rome*, in regard to their inquiries into such facts : but whether it be excusable, in a man of learning, to speak so decisively, without a proper knowledge of his subject, I must leave to the reader’s determination. But how is it, that they are only wrought *among ourselves*? St. *Bernard* performed miracles among the *Henrician* hereticks, as did St. *Francis Xavier* among the idolatrous *Indians*. How then will he make it out, that they are only wrought among ourselves ? Again : Who has, or who but God can assure him, that miracles *are not needed among us*? It is true, they are not needed, at this time, for our conversion to Christianity, for, by the grace of God, we are Christians. Nevertheless, they are serviceable to other great ends, which appertain to our eternal welfare : they warm us to devotion, and excite us to praise and adore our God, who is so wonderful in his Saints : they confirm us in our faith, and encourage us to stand fast, and to hold the divine traditions which we have received : they lead us by the hand to certain religious practices, which, we know, cannot but be profitable to our souls, because the Almighty has set his hand

hand and seal to them, by evident tokens of his approbation. These and many other good effects are the fruits which miracles produce among us.

Perhaps it may be objected against the witnesses, to whom I have appealed in the course of this treatise, that they are all *Catbolicks*, and that in the catholick Church there are neither men of veracity nor of sense to be found. Whoever is pleased to be of this opinion, I shall not dispute the point with him, but shall leave him to the folly of his own sentiments; and while his ears tingle with the sound of perjuries in every street of this protestant city, let him fondly enjoy himself in this persuasion, that in protestant countries alone is truth regarded and sacred oaths revered; and that there are no men of sagacity and discernment in the world, but who breathe these our thick vapours and *Bœotian* air.

But all are not so narrow-minded as to assume to themselves alone the property and possession of good sense and good morals. For the sake of such, I have collected the authorities alledged in this work, through each century, down to the present; by which I am myself, and think that every reasonable man, who gives them a serious perusal, will be convinced, that the continuance of miracles in the Church of Christ is as certain as the testimony of man can make it; and greater certainty than that, the nature of the subject will not bear.

I cannot conclude this matter without first letting the reader know, that among the miracles done at the tomb of St. *John Francis Regis*, mentioned in the sixth book of his life, there is one, wrought on the person of *Jane Percie of Vanose*, which

which is attested by a Calvinist surgeon, who declared, that before she was carried to the Saint's tomb, he had given her over, believing her to be incurable. There is also, in the life of St. *Vincent of Paul*, a circumstantial account of a miracle wrought by this Saint's intercession, which was attested by Protestants, as well as Catholicks. And, which is still more, this same miracle, though seemingly well proved, was found too weak to stand the test at *Rome*, and was therefore rejected. And yet we are told, that *a free inquiry into them is not allowed among us.*

Nothing now remains, but that it be considered, what consequences are deducible from these premisses, and how far they may reach towards the decision of the grand controversy about the true Church of Christ. This I shall now do, as briefly as may be.

First, from all that has been hitherto said, it appears evidently, that the continuance of miracles in the Church through every age, is as certain as human testimony can make it.

Secondly, it is no less evident that many signal miracles have been wrought by the use or instrumentality of holy oil, of holy water, of the sign of the cross, by the intercession of Saints, by the veneration of their reliques, by prayers for the faithful departed, by the sacraments, &c.

Thirdly, hence it follows, that the principles and practices of the catholick Church, touching these articles, deserve not those harsh names of *superstitious, idolatrous* and *heathenish*, which Dr. *Middleton* gives them, at every turn; as if coarse language were capable of supplying the want of arguments. How can the use of holy water, for instance,

instance, or the sign of the cross be justly deemed superstitious ; since it is certain, that, by the use of them, evident miracles have been wrought ? How can the veneration of reliques, or the invocation of Saints be thought to be idolatrous ; since God has, so often, given a sanction to such practices, by granting the most wonderful cures, and other favours, in consequence of them ? This divine interposition authorizes such practices ; and we think it our duty to follow, when the finger of God points out the way. It were needless to make this application to every article in which we differ from Protestants. The facts which I have collected speak sufficiently for themselves.

Fourthly, from the whole, it follows by a very natural consequence, that the catholick Church is the true Church of Christ : not only because its doctrines are confirmed by miracles, but also because the members of the catholick communion, and no others, have been favoured with a continuance of these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, in every age since the first planting of Christianity. This deserves a particular attention ; because, I believe, no body will make a difficulty of granting that Church to be the true one, to whose members God has granted the power of working miracles, preferably to all others. For, that society of men, with which the hand of God so visibly appears, must needs be infinitely superior to all others who are destitute of that shining mark of divine approbation.

I must now intreat the reader, that, in summing up the evidence on both sides of the question, he would divest himself of all groundless prejudices, to the best of his power. For I find that a protestant

testant writer, in his parallel between heathens and Protestants with regard to the rejection of miracles, says, that if *real* miracles were wrought now at *Rome*, they would be rejected by Protestants, as much as *chimerical* ones. So great is the force of prejudice. God grant that every one may discern the danger arising from such a disposition of mind.

F I N I S.



ERRATUM.

Page 60. lin. 32. *favour its*, read *favourite*.

THE
INDEX.

A.

<i>A</i> nas of Gaza, his testimony.	222
<i>Ambrose</i> , St., miracles wrought by him and in his favour.	167 &c.
<i>Angels</i> , the opinion of their intercourse with women, an error	104
<i>Anselm</i> , St., miracles wrought by him	236
<i>Antony</i> , St., his miracles 155. His conflicts with the devils	157
<i>Apostles</i> , their credit weakened by one of Dr. Middleton's friends	97
<i>Apostolick Fathers</i>	69
<i>Artemon</i> , a heretick	83
<i>Asclepiodotus</i> , a heretick	83
<i>Athanasius</i> , St., his testimony	155
<i>Athenagoras</i> .	90
<i>Augustin</i> , St., the monk, converted the <i>Saxons</i> by miracles	231
<i>Austin</i> , St. 187. Middleton's cavils against his testi- mony.	193

Barnabas

The INDEX.

B.

B *Arnabas, St.*, his testimony 78
Basil, St., his testimony 166
Bede, St., his testimony of *St. Cuthbert* and *St. John of Beverley* 233
Bernard, St., his testimony 241 Miracles wrought by him 243
Bernardin, St., examination of the miracles wrought by his intercession. 259
Breviaries. 65

C.

C *Anonization of Saints*, inquiries previous to it. 295
Catharine of Siena, St., miracles wrought by her 256
Catholick Church conformable to primitive antiquity 25. 26. 204. 205. 215
Celsus. 48
Certainty physical and moral 35
Challenges made by Christians, a proof of their sincerity 46. 91
Charles Borromeo, St. 274
Charlier [Anne] miraculously cured 63. 288
Christians of primitive times ill used by Dr. Middleton 152
Church, communion with it necessary 83
Le Clerc 46
Communion,

The INDEX.

<i>Communion</i> , punishments of an unworthy one	86
<i>Croesus</i> , his false accusation of St. <i>Justin</i>	111
<i>Cross</i> , sign of it used by primitive Christians	88. 169
<i>Cursing</i> of enemies falsely charged on the primitive Christians by <i>Middleton</i>	162
<i>Cyprian</i> , St., his gifts and testimony	85. 147
<i>Cyril of Jerusalem</i> , St., his testimony	158
<i>Cyril of Scythopolis</i> a monk	227

D.

<i>Dead</i> raised to life	78. 79. 181. 182. 190. 230. 251
<i>Demons</i> expelled by Christians, from p. 77. to 88.	156. 187. 189. 227.
How ejected by Jews and Gentils,	173
They were teachers of magick	125
Sometimes they wrought wonderful cures	131
<i>Didymus</i> informed of Julian's death by a revelation	161
<i>Dinocrates</i>	80
<i>Dionysius of Alexandria</i> , St.	87. 184
<i>Dominick</i> , St., miracles wrought by him	250

E.

<i>Ecclasties</i>	119. 120
<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	144 &c.
<i>Elias</i> the prophet	92
<i>Eligius</i> , St.	233

The INDEX.

<i>Ennodius, St.</i>	226
<i>Ephrem, St.</i>	166
<i>Evagrius the historian</i>	228
<i>Eucharistick cup of wine and water</i>	85
<i>Evidence, what sort necessary to ascertain a miracle</i>	37. 55
<i>Exorcists.</i>	95. 142

F.

<i>Faith, human 14. 36. divine and human</i>	35
<i>Fathers primitive, their learning and sincerity</i>	
39. accused by Middleton of forgery, folly and	
credulity 7. 11. 12. 177. their doctrines not in-	
different to Christians 10. ill consequences of	
a contempt of them	11
<i>Felicitas and Perpetua SS.</i>	80
<i>Fox, his calendar</i>	66
<i>Francis of Assisium. St.</i>	252
<i>Francis Xavier, St.</i>	264
<i>Francis de Sales, St.</i>	279
<i>Fulgentius, St.</i>	226

G.

<i>Gregory Thaumaturgus, St.</i>	84
<i>Gregory of Tours, St.</i>	227
<i>Gregory the Great, Pope 229 his instructions to St.</i>	
<i>Augustin concerning miraculous gifts</i>	232

Henri-

The INDEX.

H.

HEnricon hereticks. 243
Hermas, St. 69
Hilarion, St. 174
Holy water 229. 233. 234. 241

I.

IDolatry of the Pagans managed and supported by
the agency of Demons. 124
Jerome, St. 148. 174. his controversy against *Vigili-*
lantius 175. Middleton's cavils against him
176. 178
Ignatius, St. 71. 74
Images. 235
Intercession of Saints 87. 166. 169. 188. 281. 287
John of Lycopolis, St. miracles wrought by him 171
Jovinian a heretick 178
Irenæus, St. 78. his mistakes 112. Middleton's ex-
travagant assertion concerning his authority
113. his real character 114. his veracity ques-
tioned by Middleton 115
Julian the apostate, his attempt to rebuild the temple
of Jerusalem defeated by a miracle 160 his
death, and Middleton scandalous reflections on
the Christians 161
Justin, St. 49. 77. vilified by Middleton 100. 111.
his

The INDEX.

his true character, *ibid.* His veracity questioned

by Middleton 115

L.

Laelantius his testimony 88

Laodicea [council of] concerning exorcists 142

Legends 65

M.

Magicians, that there have been such, proved

122, 123

Martin bishop of Tours, St, 180

Martyrs vilified by Middleton 41 admitted to the immediate fruition of paradise 43. Sometimes, not always, freed from the pain of their tortures

45

Martyrdom a proof of sincerity 40

Martyrologies. 65

Maximilla a Montanist 145

Middleton, his system 6. consequences of it 9. his state of the question 33

Millennium 102. never admitted by the Church 117

Minucius Felix 80

Miracles enforce the catholick faith 6. 8. 250. they are not articles of faith unless revealed 35. not wrought for the learned only 99

Mira-

The INDEX.

Miraculous powers, the original grant of them 2. enumerated. 3. continuance of them 5. 21. 28. variety of systems about them 21. 52. not granted to the Apostles and chief disciples only 94

Montanists 82. 144

N.

*N*arcissus, St. 82

Natalis 83

Nilus 87

O.

*O*racles of the pagans 131

Origen, his testimony 84

P.

*P*alladius, his testimony 171

Papias 56 his mistake about the millennium 117.

121

Paris [abbé de] his fictitious miracles 291

Paulinus, St. 167. 186

Philip Neri, St. his miraculous gifts 276

Polycarp, St. 72. 74

Porphyry 48. confesses that magick was taught by Demons 125

Prayers for the dead 81. 272

Prisca, or *Priscilla*, a Montanist 145

Purgatory 43. 81. 272

Real

The INDEX.

R.

*R*eat presence 85. 86. 87. 170. 189. 239. 273. 288
Regis [St. Jean Francis] miracles wrought by
him 282
Reliques highly esteemed in the primitive Church
71 73. 93. 98. miracles wrought by them 166.
169. 175. 187. 189. 190. 191. 192. 228. 234.
242. 284. translation of them 168

S.

Sacrifice in the Church of God 85. 86. 167. 169.
170. 189. 241
Scriptures their authority rendered precarious by
Middleton 13 &c.
Septuagint version 109
Sibylline books 105. probably not corrupted by Chris-
tians 106. certainly not by St. Justin, nor St.
Hermas, nor Papias 107. never obtained full
credit in the Church 108
Simon Magus, his statue at Rome. 110
Sozomen. 161
Stephen of Byzantium. 235
Sulpicius Severus, St. 180
Symeon Stylites, St. his miracles 206
Symeon Stylites Junr. St. 229
Teresa,

The INDEX.

T.

<i>Theresa, St.</i> her miraculous gifts.	270
<i>Tertullian.</i>	79. 129. 145
<i>Theodotus, St.</i>	87
<i>Theodoret</i> his testimony 206. <i>Middleton's</i> exceptions against it	208. 209. &c.
<i>Theophilus, St.</i>	79. 126
<i>Tongues</i>	79. 149. 266
<i>Tradition</i> 116, <i>Middleton's</i> mistakes about it 116 to 121. false and true traditions	118
<i>Trajan</i> tries the oracle of <i>Heliopolis</i>	131

U.

<i>Van-Dale</i>	7. 46
<i>Ventriloquist</i> 139. held correspondence with fa- miliar spirits	140
<i>Victor Vitensis, St.</i> , his testimony 218. <i>Middleton's</i> objections against it	221
<i>Vincent Ferrer, St.</i>	257
<i>Vincent of Paul, St.</i>	286

W.

<i>Wiston's</i> system of the continuance of miracles	24
<i>Witchcraft</i>	51. 123
<i>Witnesses</i> , what credit due to them	35







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